# Esquite

January / February 2016 | £4.35

Style & Substance

# Style Heroes

Bowie Ferry Lydon Jagger Cobain

An Esquire appreciation

#### Inside

Giles Coren goes country, part two

AA Gill on the pick-up myth

Jeremy Langmead rugs up

Russell Norman's festive veg out

Will Self gets high (without ever leaving the ground)

PLUS: THE WIT AND WISDOM OF HARVEY KEITEL



David Bowie photographed in London, 1983 1 of 5 limited edition covers



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Style Heroes Bowie

**Ferry** Lydon Jagger Cobain

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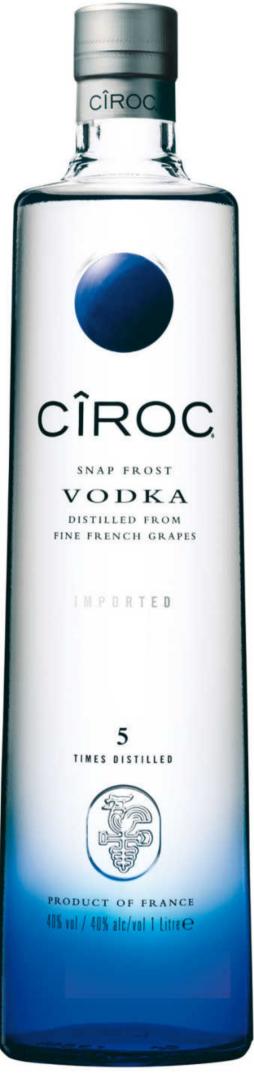


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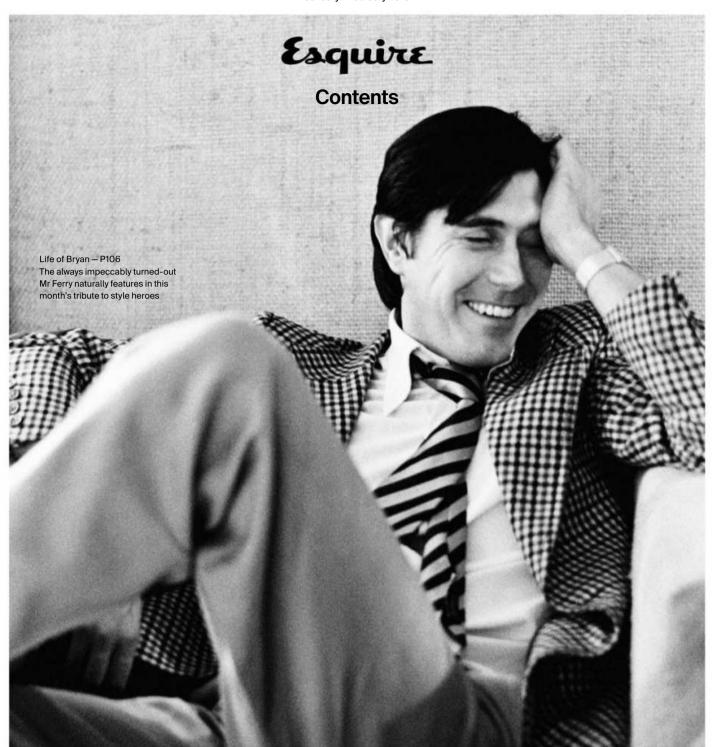




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Cover photographs: David Bowie by Denis O'Regan, 1983; Bryan Ferry by Mick Rock, 1976; John Lydon by Adrian Boot, 1977; Mick Jagger by Jim Marshall, 1972; Kurt Cobain by Jesse Frohman, 1993 Subscriber edition: John Lydon by Aaron Rapoport, 1981













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#### **CONTRIBUTORS**

#### Will Self

"Mark Vanhoenacker's refusal to let me crash a (simulated) 747 still rankles," says Self of his latest mission. "If he'd let me go through with it, it might have been a salutary experience, changing me from a feckless ne'er-do-well into the sort of deeply responsible individual who believes wholeheartedly in Heathrow expansion." Read what happened instead on page 126. The editor-at-large is working on a new novel, *Phone*.

#### Sam Parker

Stunned by a report from the Office for National Statistics, Parker this month investigates Britain's male suicide crisis. "Even though suicide is the biggest killer of men under 50, it is still a taboo subject," he says. "Meeting so many inspiring people in researching this article, I realised how big a part of the problem that is." Parker is deputy editor of Esquire.co.uk.

#### **Giles Coren**

Last month, we revealed how Esquire's editor-at-large had decamped to the country. Part two of Coren's rural soap opera sees him bullied into tractor purchases by the gardener and getting sartorially shamed at the village Christmas gathering. Perhaps he'll have got the hang of it all by part three. A columnist and critic for The Times, his most recent book, How to Eat Out, is available now.



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To overcome his terror of flying, Will Self accepts an invitation to pilot a Boeing 747 airliner by himself — relax, it's in a British Airways simulator

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Something is killing more and more young British men every year. Sam Parker reports on the rise in male suicide and the measures underway to halt it





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#### **Richard Moore**

"During the Tour de France, there was suspicion around winner Chris Froome and a clamour for him to submit to physiological testing," says Moore. "After the Tour, Froome's wife asked if I could go to a lab to witness the tests. What happened was fascinating, and later, when a 2007 lab report surfaced, even more so." Moore is the author of Etape: The Untold Stories of the Tour de France's Defining Stages.

#### Tomo Brejc

"On a crisp morning, we started with a walk through Soho, trying to make ourselves invisible before people recognised Domhnall Gleeson," says the photographer, who shot the Irish actor in this winter's finest eveningwear. "We knew it wouldn't last long, so went back inside. Thanks to Domhnall we had a brilliant time." Londonbased Brejc's work has appeared in L'Uomo Vogue and Harper's Bazaar, among others.

#### **AA Gill**

As Uncle Dysfunctional, the nation's most waspish critic again tackles the personal calamities plaguing *Esquire* readers. "The truth is about getting older that, actually, I am less and less surprised by anything, but more and more shocked. Now I'm 61, nothing surprises and everything shocks me." An internationally celebrated writer for *Vanity Fair* and *The Sunday Times*, Gill's latest book, *Pour Me*, is out now.

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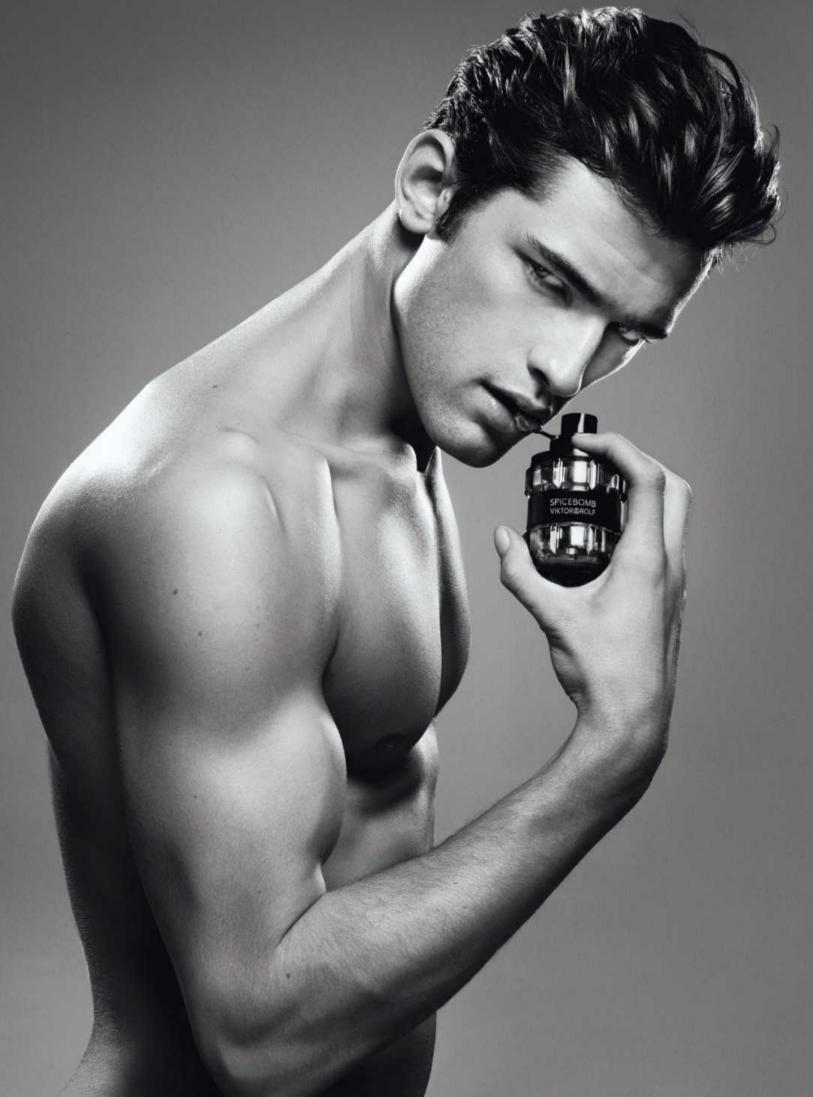
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### EDITOR'S LETTER

No! REALLY? YOU THINK SO? Well, OK, maybe a bit. Not sure exactly: haven't weighed myself. Sweet of you to notice, though. I mean, yeah, fewer carbs for sure. More avocados. Nope, still drinking. Exercise? Wheezy trudges round the park. Even some sinew-straining in the gym. I know! Who'd have thought it? You're not looking too shabby yourself, by the way. What's *your* secret?

So, I've shed some timber. Not a whole tree. Not a scary, Nigel Lawson-style, don't-you-think-you-should-see-a-doctor weight plunge. More a George Osborne svelte-down, since we're talking chancellors. And yes, I do know there's a passing resemblance; and, yes, I was aware that for a while I was in danger of becoming Fat George Osborne, so dramatic was his own shrinkage; and no, that wasn't my primary motivation for cutting out the pies. (That's my story, anyway, and I'm sticking to it like spinach to teeth.) But looking like Gorgeous George is one thing. Looking like his portlier older brother? That, like the revolting green juice I've taken to forcing down most mornings, would have been hard to swallow.

There are clear benefits to losing weight. I mean benefits beyond not looking fatter and older than the Chancellor of the Exchequer. You feel healthier, because you probably are, and more attractive, even if you're not. The first few times it's mentioned in public you're pleased, in a bashful sort of way. After a while, the more often your new figure is remarked upon, the more you come to feel only that you must have been a terrible porker before, since you're hardly Early Bowie now, and people are making such a *fuss*.

You also tire of explaining how you've done it. For the record my fiendishly clever health regime — the patented Alex Bilmes Eat Less, Sweat More Diet — is, as the marketable title suggests, a combination of cutting out chips on toast and owning, and even occasionally wearing, running shoes.

The downside — apart from having to cut out the chips on toast

and occasionally wear running shoes — is that none of my old clothes fit me. But even that can be as much opportunity as obstacle. What happens when you have to reconsider your wardrobe for the right reasons, rather than because you've ballooned or lost a limb in a latenight carousing incident, is that you fall in love with clothes again. They make you feel good, instead of just dressed.

Which brings us to the changing room at Kilgour, a marvel of minimalism at 5 Savile Row, London, where I am trying on suits with the help of two elegant young men — both, conveniently, called Alex. (Such is his monomaniacal



Separated at birth: Esquire Editor-in-Chief Alex Bilmes (left) and Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne (right)

attention to detail that I wouldn't put it past Kilgour's design maestro, Carlo Brandelli, to insist that shop staff refer to themselves by the name of the client they are at that moment serving, to make an already spoiling retail experience just that bit more agreeable.)

The last time I tried on a Kilgour suit was in the autumn of 2014, for an article in *The Times* heralding an innovative new garment, the multi purpose suit, which has the appearance of a business suit but the feel of a particularly luxurious tracksuit. I had agreed to put the suit to the test by wearing it first to meetings, then to a smart lunch, to be followed by an afternoon run. The joke was not on the suit, a glorious thing in softest merino wool, but on me, and *The Times* published the photos to prove it: yours truly "jogging" through Green Park in said suit and trainers. Reactions were — how best to put this? — not muted. (AA Gill dialled my number, laughed down the phone like a sociopath for not less than two minutes, and then hung up without a word. I didn't have to ask why.)

That jacket was a size 42, and the waist was elasticated; it needed to be. This time I'm a 38. I tell you this not to boast — although you can send congratulations cards and gifts (nothing edible please) to the usual address — but to demonstrate my urgent need for new duds, especially for the office. A number of more recently acquired suits I have had altered but certain old favourites are so huge on me now that I appear to be paying homage to the great David Byrne in *Stop Making Sense*. And even my miracle-working Soho tailor is going to struggle to turn a capacious 42 into a slender 38 without sacrificing something in the line of the suit.

It's not just about size. It's about style, too. Kilgour's ready-to-wear collection offers two "blocks": the No 5 and the No 8. The 5 is the more contemporary, the jacket cut shorter and narrower, with slim lapels, no pocket flaps, fly-fronted (the button is covered) and with slimmer trousers. Very smart, but a bit "directional" for fusty old me. The 8 is hardly fogeyish, but it's more trad, so that's the one I try first. The Alexes will back me on this: it looks splendid.

Only to humour them, because they're so nice (and, for the moment, so well-named) I also try the 5, in a fabric that has the appearance of textured denim, although it's actually a wool and silk mix. Much to my surprise, I find myself taking it. It makes me feel taller, leaner, sharper — and (even) smugger than I have for years. It makes the pie-denial and the circuits of the park seem worth it.

That's what great clothes can do.

Meanwhile, a wise friend who has been thinner and fatter and points in between advises me to hang on to my roomy old clobber. Because as sure as night follows day, so binge follows purge — and I'll need a more generous cut before too long. (I trust the MP for Tatton has done the same.) Plus it's Christmas. You can't avoid the occasional pie at Christmas. Probably even David Bowie has a pie at Christmas. On which note, I wish you a happy, healthy holidays. See you back here in February, in some shape or other.

Alex Bilmes, Editor-in-Chief

There are clear benefits to losing weight. I mean benefits beyond not looking fatter and older than the Chancellor of the Exchequer

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### UNCLE DYSFUNCTIONAL

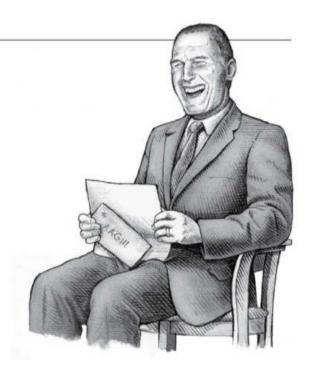
This month, our agony expert offers friendly advice to a nervous flatulist, a premature ejaculist and a lustful conversationalist. Results may vary...

Dear Uncle Dysfunctional,

I know this sounds funny, as in amusing, but that's why I'm reduced to writing to you about it. No one will take me seriously and, consequently, I suffer from nervous flatulence. I produce a lot of wind and release it at really inconvenient moments in lifts, and I have an overwhelming need to fart whenever I have a massage. I can feel the gasses building up, and the pressure on my sphincter is unbearable. If there is a quiet moment in the theatre or at a concert, my bottom can sense it and is compelled to fill the unforgiving silence with a rumble of gastric crowing. I can fart rhythmically as I walk, each footfall producing a martial trump. I rarely get to have sex with the same person twice as each thrust is accompanied by a sphincter whistle; an orgasm is a raga of ecstatic ululation. I have tried everything to hush my cacophonous bowel: I eat a bland and blameless diet; I take Friendly Flora and gallons of Milk of Magnesia. But it makes no difference. Whenever the mood is sombre, solemn or seductive, my arse bellows like a drunken mariachi band. In desperation, I've even attempted to alter the pitch of my sphincter by changing its aperture using a selection of blunt objects of increasing width in the hope that it might become more of a "futt" than a "parp", but to no avail. Please, please could you take this seriously and tell me what I should do? Charlie, Windermere

Dear Charlie, Get a dog. Get two dogs.

Whenever the mood is sombre, solemn or seductive, my arse bellows like a drunken mariachi band



Dear Uncle Dysfunctional,

I'm 19, I've just moved to New York to go to college and I've never had so much sex. Oh my god, there are so many hot and horny women here — it's really easy to hook up with people. There's loads of sexual grazing and suck-it-and-see, but my problem is that I'm really quick off the mark. I come in a couple of thrusts — my record is four. Blow jobs are even quicker. What can I do? What are the tricks of the slow trade? It's not stopping me getting laid but I'd like to get laid for a bit longer.

Jonah, New York

Dear Jonah,

This is not a rare problem. If you offer pant advice to men, pretty soon you realise that the blokes who write in either can't get it up or can't keep it in. So, the first thing to point

out is that, given the choice, your problem is the lesser of the penile evils. That said, worrying about premature ejaculation, the low self-worth and the anticipatory anxiety it brings with it can lead to what the more serious sexologists call erectile dysfunction, and what you and I know as "thumbing it in soft". The sexologists also have various organic methods for halting the little swimmers before they jump the gun. These include various pinchers, squeezers, strangleholds and karate chops, all of which are supposed to be administered by your partner at *le moment* critique, which she will have to be told about before you start. And that's about as sexy as the safety instructions before take-off. It may work in theory but, in practice, it's not going to be happening. Then there's the old standby of double bagging - the two Irish condoms to be sure, to be sure. Or proprietary inhibiting sprays and creams, which are about numbing sensation. Or you could dip your cock in cocaine, which works on the same principle but is expensive, desperately Nineties and illegal. And, anyway, numbing or inhibiting sensations rather foil the unique selling point of sex. So, what's to be done? Well, first, this is as much a mental as a physical problem. It's probably not that your bellend is as sensitive as Laurence Llewelyn-Bowen, it's that your imagination is as fertile as Alan Titchmarsh's greenhouse. It's a tosser's errand to try and disentangle the physical from the mental when it comes to sex, but it's probably more efficacious to treat the mental side rather than the mechanics: you need to lower the expectation without decreasing the pleasure. So stop thinking of orgasm as being the winning post of sex or, rather, stop thinking of your orgasm as the big number. Instead, concentrate on hers. Imagine that the aim of sex is to give your partner a premature orgasm: you've got to make her come as quickly as possible and only then is it your turn. You lose if you climax first. After she's come second, by coming first, then it's your turn. And, frankly, she won't care how quickly you arrive, she'll just thank you for a terrific, sensitive, accomplished shag. The long-term solution, as it were, is that you need a girlfriend. Repetition is the answer to all performance ills, not just in sex but in life. Practice makes, if not perfect, then proficient, and the best practice is with a practice partner. Sleeping with someone you love every night is the best cure for a sprinting prick. Someone else said: marriage as opposed

Pick-up lines are a wholly male myth. Nothing you say is going to make any girl have sex with you. Nothing, ever. I mean it to serial dating is swapping the hurly-burly of the couch for the sedate and sophisticated pleasure of the double bed. You don't have to get married but you do need to get emotional and committed. But a word of warning: the embarrassment of premature ejaculation is nothing compared with the trauma of premature falling in love.

Dear Uncle Dysfunctional, You're good at using your words. Can you recommend any sure-fire, killer pick-up lines? Ahmed, Hong Kong

#### Dear Ahmed,

Yes: silence. And a fleeting smile. There are no sure-fire pick-up lines. Pick-up lines are a wholly male myth. Nothing you say — nothing slick, funny, provocative, winsome, disingenuous, pleading — is going to make any girl have sex with you. Nothing, ever. I mean it. If you say, "Have you got any Jewish in you? Would you like some?" And a girl you've never met before says, "mazel tov", it's because she fancied you before you opened your mouth, and she decided to get her end away despite your arthritic bon mot. The golden rule of sex that all men should understand, indeed, most men should have tattooed, is that you get laid despite your best efforts, not because of them. And the dominant partner in any social arrangement is the one who has the power of veto and holds the goods. And that'll be the ladies.









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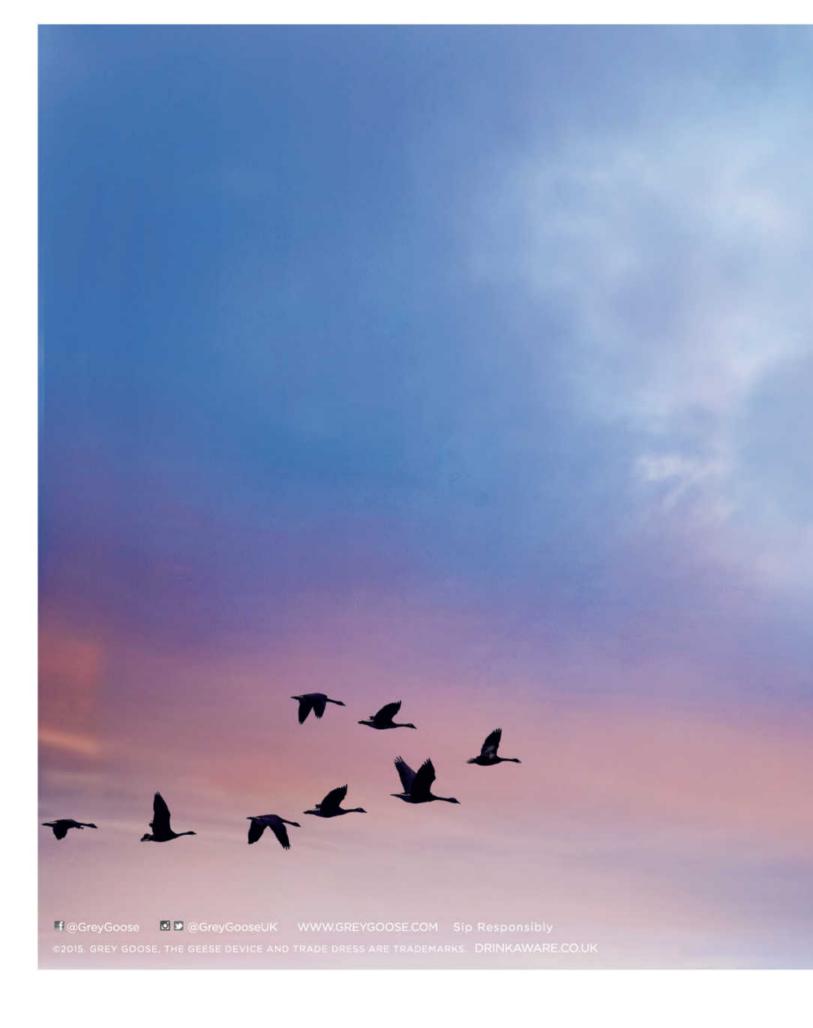
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# WELCOME TO MY WORLD



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### 1. Lemons, limes, eggs 6. Large green olives 2. Silver-plated cocktail shaker, 7. Tangueray Export Esquire Style £80, by Arthur Price; Strength Gin, £21 for 70cl; thewhiskyexchange.com 3. Tapatio Blanca Tequila, £23 for 8. Stainless steel jigger, £12, 50cl; thewhiskyexchange.com by Yukiwa; starshaker.com 9. SodaStream, £100; 4. Grey Goose Vodka, £34 for 70cl; thewhiskyexchange.com sodastream.co.uk 5. Fever-Tree Indian tonic water, £1 for 20cl; thewhiskyexchange.com Fashion / Grooming / Tech / Food / Cars Edited by Teo van den Broeke Gifts for wise men Tanquera Whatever you do this festive season, don't let your bar run dry. Here are Esquire's cocktail cabinet essentials

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1////////////



### 2 | Topman THE OVERSHIRT

If the occasion's not smart enough for a suit or blazer, but you still need a warm middle layer, a thick overshirt is this season's essential purchase. Works best on top of a regular poplin shirt, or layer it with a crew-neck jumper or sweatshirt.

Khaki wool-blend **overshirt**, £90; navy cotton **bomber jacket**, £30; white cotton long-sleeved **T-shirt**, £18; navy cotton **chinos**, £35





### 3 | H&M THE CAMEL COAT

This season, oversized, drapey outer-wear is everywhere. This camel-toned wool coat is the ultimate expression of the trend (camel is big news this winter). Try it over layers, such as a chunky roll-neck in a contrasting shade.

Camel wool coat, £80; dark green cotton jumper, £30; navy cotton trousers, £30; beige wool scarf, £20





# Edited by Charlie Teasdale | Fashion assistat: Teresa Eberle I Grooming: Amiee Hershan @ Stella Creative Artists using Kiehl's Since 1815, Chanel Le Lift and S 2016 I Model: Max @ Supa Model Management I See Stockists page for details

# 4 | Marks & Spencer THE DOUBLE-BREASTED SUIT

The quintessential British retailer has really upped its suiting offering in recent seasons. This double-breasted, wool suit from the Best of British collection by M&S wraps the body like a glove. Wear yours with a pair of monk-strap shoes and a parka for a still-smart mid-winter look.

Black wool double-breasted **suit**, £700; grey merino wool/silk **roll-neck**, £45; tortoiseshell **spectacles**, £130, by Ray-Ban



# 6 | John Lewis THE TUXEDO

Party season is upon us, so start thinking about a tuxedo. Given that you'll wear it so rarely, you need high quality for a reasonable price.

Look no further than John
Lewis — its evening wear range is better than ever, this midnight blue tuxedo being a case in point.

Navy/black dinner jacket, £110; navy wool-blend trousers, £50; white cotton dress shirt, £55; black velvet bow tie, £25. Black patent leather shoes, £60, by Dune London





### 5 | Next THE COLLARLESS SHIRT

A collarless shirt needn't just be for the summer months. In winter, opt for a version in a thick, brushed cotton or dense, boiled wool. Next has a particularly strong line in these. Wear with some on-trend wideleg trousers and a pair of white trainers.

Navy wool/black shearling jacket, £85; light grey cotton grandad shirt, £25; black cotton trousers, £32



















RUTLAND BORN & BRED

→ I have a cold. I'm one of those annoying people sitting next to you on the train or bus that splutters and sneezes his way through the journey. There is no solution, really. You can't take a day off with a cold - sounds far too wussy, alas — and we've yet to adopt the odd-looking, vet wholly sensible, approach of Japanese commuters who wear paper masks over their noses and mouths. You could, if it's chilly, wear a balaclava or a giant scarf for the entire commute, but fellow travellers might worry you're about to rob them. Otherwise, CP Company make jackets with hoods that have goggles in the front so you can zip the hood right over your head and still see where you're going. It may sound bonkers, but the number of times I've almost been hit by a car as I attempt to cross the road when I have my Canada Goose parka hood zipped up...

'Tis the season of the down-filled waterproof, however, and there are many to choose from. Predictably, perhaps, I'm going to suggest you rely on the classics by Moncler, Descente and the aforementioned Canada Goose (you can opt for a style without the covote-trimmed hood if you're anti-fur). But there are also a host of more niche brands that offer something a little different: Rocky Mountain Featherbed is one of these (sort of Brokeback Mountain meets sofa.com, which I know doesn't sound too tempting, but check them out), as well as The Workers Club, a utilitarianfocused label that offers some neat handcrafted weatherproof pieces.

All of these brands are suggesting the gilet as the item you should be investing in this winter. And if you don't mind having wet arms, it is indeed a great piece to have in your wardrobe. First, despite being armless, they keep you toasty warm. Second, they look as good over a suit jacket as they do over a chunky sweater. Third, they're easy to slip on or off even on a packed commuter train, and finally, since there's less material in them, they cost less. Hoorah.

The trick with the gilet is to get one that either has a design quirk to it, or to wear it with a not-too-traditional ensemble. Team a green padded one with moleskin trousers and a flannel shirt, for example, and you risk looking like someone who spends his weekends in Chipping Norton. Rocky Mountain Featherbed (I just like



Jeremy Langmead

A winter-weatherproof gilet is nothing to be sniffed at

saying the name), does gilets with cowboy leather trim and shearling linings. The Workers Club, Tod's and Barena all have handsome checked wool ones. Maison Kitsuné has them in quilted wool, while Missoni makes a zigzag crochet version that looks much nicer than it sounds. All of these, happily, will look out of place at Soho Farmhouse.

The other item of sartorial Lemsip, which, when taken out of "Sloaney Pony" context, looks good this winter, is corduroy trousers. These *must* be worn slim-fit and, if you'll allow me to be particularly prescriptive, in black. The best pairs I've tried on are by Tom Ford, Saint Laurent, Acne and Gucci. These look good worn with



a grey textured wool or tweed blazer (also by Saint Laurent if you've got the dosh), and tan or mid-brown suede Chelsea boots (all skinny-fit black trousers or jeans should be worn with these coloured shoes or boots this winter). Alternatively, wear them with a grey-marl sweatshirt (Levi's Vintage Clothing) and white trainers (Adidas Stan Smiths before we all get bored of them again).

My final germ-friendly clothing suggestion is — and I hesitate, as it sounds like something Khloé or Kourtney Kardashian might wear — a velvet hoodie. They are so comforting, and the best is the oversized deep burgundy version by Haider Ackermann, but these are hard to come by ever since Kanye West was photographed wearing one. Another option, and equally snug, is the soft, velvety-fleece hoodie by Japanese label White Mountaineering.

If you were a true man of fashion seeking comfort, you would also track down a pair of kangaroo fur-lined, backless leather Gucci slippers, which many style folk are wearing out during the daytime, too. Although I naturally scoffed when a friend of mine turned up in a pair, I have to admit that when I tried them on, it was like dipping my toes into a jar of warm honey. If you are tempted — and we won't judge — they come in a furry loafer version that is mildly less eccentric.

Anyway, must dash — I'm off to buy an Hermès Vicks inhaler. ■

Illustration by Mitch Blunt 51







### THE YOUNG PRETENDER

### McLaren 540C

Woking's finest are on a mission to "bring the brand to a new audience" — or sell more cars, to you and me — so enter the marque's most affordable motor yet, the £126,000 540C. OK, it's not exactly chump change but it's a major price drop from its other models and puts it in direct competition with the new Audi R8 and the top-spec Porsche 911 Turbo. It promises to be more comfy and less intense to drive every day than its older brothers, but with 533bhp and acceleration of 0–62mph in 3.5secs, this is still a very serious piece of kit. £126,000, due early 2016; mclaren.com



### THE HAIR DRYER

### Lamborghini Huracán Spyder

How can you improve on the Huracán, Lambo's typically space age 5.2-litre V10? By taking its roof off, of course, and replacing it with a folding lightweight fabric soft top, which will make it one of the most terrifyingly fast convertibles on the planet. There's very little compromise on speed, with the new Spyder capable of 0–60mph in 3.4secs to the coupé's 3.2, and it can still nudge past 200mph if your nerves can handle it. And yes, that's what we mean by hair dryer. £205,000, due spring 2016; lamborghini.com



### THE COMEBACK KID

### Honda NSX

There's been a long wait for this follow-up to the now legendary Ayrton Sennadeveloped, all-aluminium 1991 original, and the early signs are that it will live up to its predecessor's everyday-supercar philosophy. Given Honda's engineering credentials, it's predictably hi-tech: there's a hybrid powertrain that combines a 3.0-litre petrol engine with three electric motors, a nine-speed, dual-clutch gearbox and a lightweight chassis. And it looks fantastic. It's increasingly hard to make a new supercar that stands out, but this NSX design manages it. £120,000, due spring 2016; honda.co.uk



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### THE ACCIDENTAL COOK

# Magnificent meat-free morsels

Throw a healthy New Year's banquet with a ballsy Italian vegetarian centrepiece







→ Kingsley Amis famously declared that the most depressing three words in the English language are "red or white?" That's all very well when you're at the dinner table being plied with wine. When you're in the kitchen about to serve supper, the most depressing three words in the English language are "I'm a vegetarian" — especially if you've been marinating beef cheeks for two days and they're

now braising nicely in the oven, thank you very much.

Now look, I've got nothing against vegetarians. Lovely people. I even tried quinoa myself once. But when you're cooking at home, discovering that one of your guests only eats mung beans can be a right royal pain in the rump steak. There was a time when they could be palmed off with an emergency plate of pasta and pesto.

Above: if you can't beat 'em, join 'em — Norman goes veggie with his spinach and ricotta malfatti Not any more. The vegetarians are revolting. They will no longer lie back and let you tickle their tummies with chives. They want restaurant-quality food prepared with the same care and attention as the fancy stuff you're serving the carnivores.

I have even seen my otherwise mild-mannered herbivore chums get apoplectic with rage in restaurants if the vegetarian option is too predictable. (Apparently, there is nothing that makes a vegetarian see red quite like "something-something goat's cheese" or "something-something beetroot" on a menu. I mean, talk about ungrateful, right?) Of course, you might argue that vegetarians have the moral upper hand at the moment. With more and more health scares concerning flesh (mad cow disease, the horsemeat pies scandal) and its consumption (heart disease, bowel cancer), now is a very good time to cut down on the cutlets and beef up on the beans.

If vegetarians aren't quite having the last laugh, they are certainly enjoying the penultimate chuckle. And with your New Year health kick, January might be an opportune occasion to start eating less meat. But let's get back to that dinner party. How are you going to keep the persistent vegetarian happy? Well, my suggestion is to go hardcore. Play them at their own game. Make the whole meal a veggie feast. Huge bowls of hearty

# "Discovering one of your guests only eats mung beans can be a royal pain in the rump steak"

salads. Tasty beans and pulses. Classic mirepoix lentils. And, as a centrepiece, this deceptively simple home-made malfatti (dumplings) recipe that has deep umami flavours and plenty of theatricality, too. You could even get everyone to help you spin the glasses. After a few bottles of "red or white", what could possibly go wrong?

Eagle-eyed readers will have noticed a slight change to the name of this column. After eight months as The Reluctant Cook, I realised that the last thing I experienced while preparing and writing these monthly missives was apathy or indifference. Quite the opposite, in fact. So, to mark the beginning of 2016, here's to a new year, new start, new title, same bad attitude and hangdog expression...

Instagram: @Russell\_Norman Russell's new book Spuntino: Comfort Food (New York Style) is out now, published by Bloomsbury











### Spinach and ricotta malfatti

### Serves 4

- 520g baby spinach leaves, washed
- 250g ricotta cheese
- 200g grated Parmesan cheese (or rennet-free Twineham Grange)
- 100g butter
- 200g semolina
- 50g "00" flour
- 1 large free-range egg, beaten
- ½ tsp freshly grated nutmeg
- Flaky sea salt
- Ground black pepper
- Handful picked sage leaves

### Method

1 Steam the spinach for 3mins, drain the excess water and chop the leaves very roughly. Set aside.

2 Mix the flour and ricotta in a large bowl until it resembles lumpy, moist breadcrumbs. With a wooden spoon, stir in the egg and three-quarters of the Parmesan. Add a good pinch of salt, a decent twist of pepper, the nutmeg and then the spinach, and combine everything thoroughly.

3 Take a large, stemmed wine glass and drop in a dessertspoonful of semolina. Using a separate, clean dessert spoon, dollop a glob of the ricotta mixture into the glass. Swirl around for a few seconds until you have a walnut-sized dumpling. Lay onto a generously semolina-dusted tray. Repeat until all the mixture is used up. When you have finished, you should have 24 or so little malfatti.

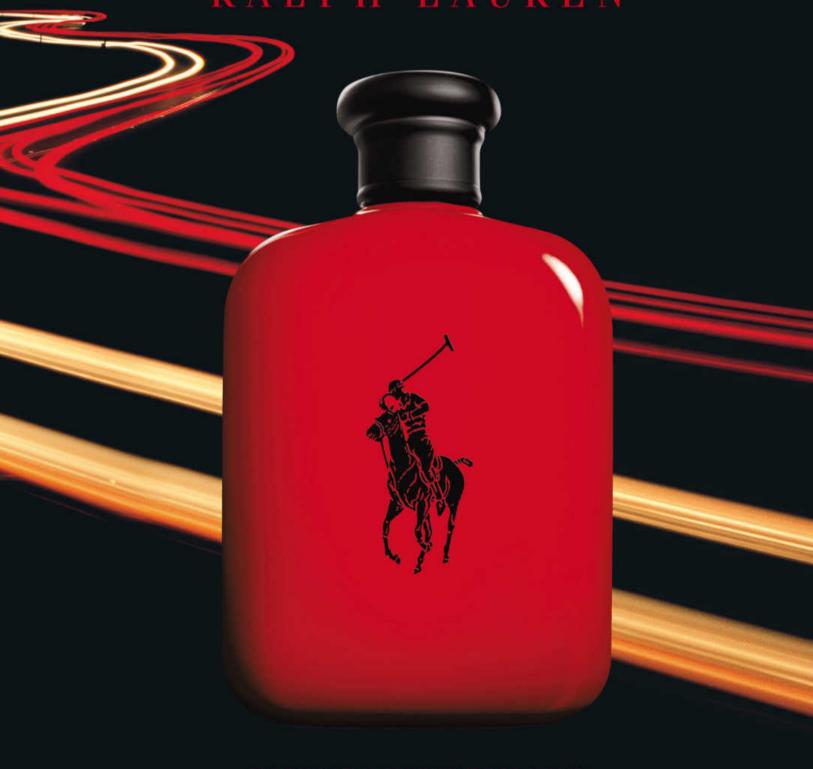
4 Fill a large pan with cold water and bring to a hearty boil. Drop in the malfatti as quickly as possible, bring back to the boil and then continue to simmer for about 3mins. Meanwhile, in a small saucepan over a medium heat, melt the butter and add the sage leaves. When it bubbles, reduce the heat to very low. The malfatti will have floated to the surface when they are ready.

5 Turn off the heat, remove the malfatti with a slotted spoon and drain away the excess water on a clean tea towel. Evenly distribute onto four warmed plates, pour the butter and sage over the top, and finally, scatter the remaining Parmesan.





# POLORED RALPH LAUREN



### THE MACKLIN REGIME



# The smartphone workout

Let your apps take the strain

→ Incorporating well-being and fitness into your daily routine can be tough if time is at a premium. Research, expert guidance, planning, shopping, tracking — it can become a full-time job. However, there is a way to alleviate this additional stress: apps. Your smartphone can deliver workout routines, source local classes, personal trainers, nutritionists, therapists, and offer a wealth of advice, making you smarter, more focused and better motivated. Use these apps in the right way and you'll boost your overall physical and mental health. Here are some of the best.



### **Best for tracking** performance

### **Health Mate**

A daily activity tracker and heart-rate monitor that will help you keep tabs on your progress and improve fitness in the long term.

### Strava

A tried and tested sports monitor specifically for runners and cyclists.

### **Best for sports** and classes

If you prefer outdoor sports to the gym, this app will put you in touch with sports teams in your community.

### **Mindbody Connect**

An app to help you navigate and book the best aymnasium classes and services locally and worldwide.



### **Best for training** technique

### **Body Space**

Learn new exercises and converse with potential new gym buddies.

### **FITMO**

training plan and advice via the app.

### **Best for sleep**

### Twiliaht

This app promotes a good night's sleep by removing the brain-stimulating blue light from your Android phone in the evenings, helping you beat insomnia.

### Water Your Body

is essential. This app will monitor your daily water intake to ensure you perform

### Best for the brain

### **Brain Ha**

Proven to increase memory, speed and attention, this app is packed with twominute puzzles, quizzes and training programmes that will train the most important part of your body: the brain.

### Headspace

Meditation benefits include increased focus and less stress. This is a gym membership for the mind.

### **Best for nutrition**

Recalibrate your diet with advice, food information and a personal nutritionist.

Where to eat and what to order if you suffer from allergies, food intolerances, or are on a lean-and-clean diet.

### Whole Foods Market .

With over 3,700 recipes, cooking tips and shopping lists, this is your ideal health-focused culinary companion.

### **Best for focus**

For focus and mental agility, hydration to the best of your abilities.

### **Best for medication** and supplements

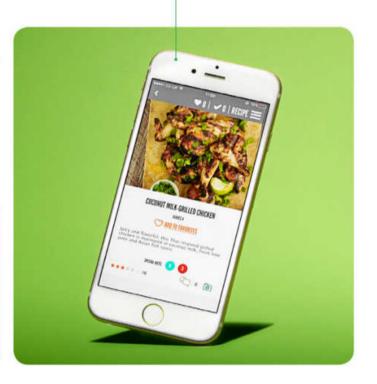
Pharmaceutical encyclopedia which helps identify drugs, check dosages, log your own medical records and avoid negative interactions.

### Best for motivation

Debits your account every time you miss a gym session, sports class or run.

Social media app where gym selfies are OK and members share their progress.

A music app specifically for training: build your playlists based on BPM.











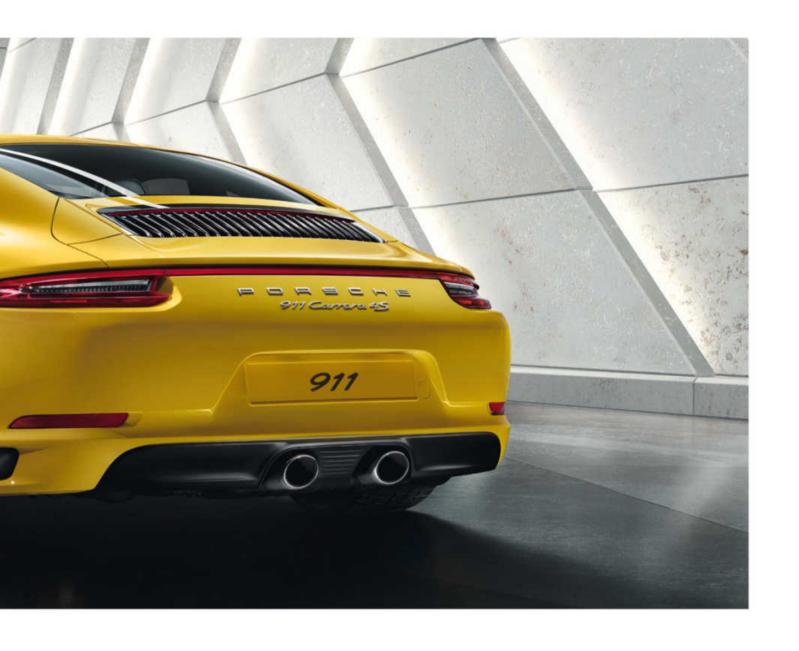
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### Fit for purpose J Crew's denim overhaul keeps its quality high and the choices simple → Prior to its arrival in the UK two vears ago, a visit to J Crew was the highlight of a trip to America for shoppers drawn by the quality, cut and fashion-forward aesthetic of its clothes. To maintain its loyal following, the brand has this season streamlined its denim collection. There are now just three basic fits for men — slim, slimmest and straight — each in a selection of washes. All J Crew's **CRED, TIGHT** denim is now made at Japan's famed Kaihara textile mill, while the washes AND BLUE are done via an in-house rope-The three new basic styles dyeing technique at the brand's of jeans by J Crew, from factory in Kentucky. The fraying £125, available at the and distressing is still finished new Redchurch Street store, London E2 by hand, so your new jeans will look lived-in as soon as you pull them on. jcrew.com/uk

### Frank Muytjens Menswear director, J Crew

"We were inspired by vintage workwear for our new denim collection, in particular the naturally broken-in denim from the Forties and Fifties. They had the best textures... the jeans themselves told a story. We wanted to work with the best Japanese mills available. They are so meticulous about how things are done and respectful of the process, you can really tell the difference in the quality of the denim they produce."

### Crew cuts: the three new denim fits — straight, slimmer and slimmest...

### 1040

Offering more room to move, the 1040 is J Crew's straight fit. The leg seams run parallel all the way down from hip to cuff.

How to wear it: these jeans work best with white leather sneakers (on the chunkier side), a plain white T-shirt, fine-gauge knitwear and an overshirt.

### 770

A snugger fit than the 1040, but only slightly. The 770 is straight over the hip, then cinches in a little on the thigh, over the knees and down to the ankles.

**How to wear it:** the slimmer leg demands a slimmer shoe, so go for Chelsea boots with a cable-knit sweater and a wool overcoat.

### 484

The skinniest of the lot, but by no means sprayed-on. In fact, the 484 is the sleekest of the three, making it great for smart-casual.

How to wear it: in the brand's Riverton wash with brown leather lace-ups, a pale blue shirt and unstructured blazer. A light scarf wouldn't go amiss, either.



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The New Abarth 595 Yamaha Factory Racing starts from £17,420 OTR. Official fuel consumption figures for Abarth 595 Yamaha Factory Racing: mpg (I/100km): Combined 47.1 (6.0), Urban 35.8 (7.9), Extra urban 57.6 (4.9), CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions: 139 g/km. Fuel consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> figures are obtained for comparative purposes in accordance with EC directives/regulations and may not be representative of real-life driving conditions. Model shown is the Abarth 595 Yamaha Factory Racing 1.4 T-Jet 160 HP at £17,890 OTR including Gara White paint at £300 and optional Side Stripe and Mirror covers at £170. Abarth UK is a trading style of Fiat Chrysler Automobiles UK Ltd.





BY JAMES GURNEY

## Turn black time

Tudor's Heritage Black Bay mines its Rolex heritage for a very modern update

#### ESQUIRE APPROVES

Tudor Heritage Black Bay "Black" on black webbing strap, £2,330, by **Tudor** tudorwatch.com





→ The one fact people recognize about Tudor is that it is Rolex's more accessible diffusion brand. While there was a point when that was true, that time is emphatically over, save in price. In the past decade, Tudor has been comprehensively re-engineered as a brand and the result is a timepiece range with more character and dash than all but a very few of its competitors.

The job started with digging out the heritage, and despite the shadow of Rolex, Tudor has plenty of rich seams to mine. More importantly, Tudor appointed Davide Cerrato, a Rolex insider, as creative director and gave him the freedom to forge a contemporary identity.

Black Bay Heritage "Black" is the third model in a series that plays liberally with the past — the snowflake hands come from a Fifties Tudor Submariner and the chunky crown from another vintage piece.

This new model has a domed crystal, "black-chocolate" dial with pink gold hands and (luminous) hour

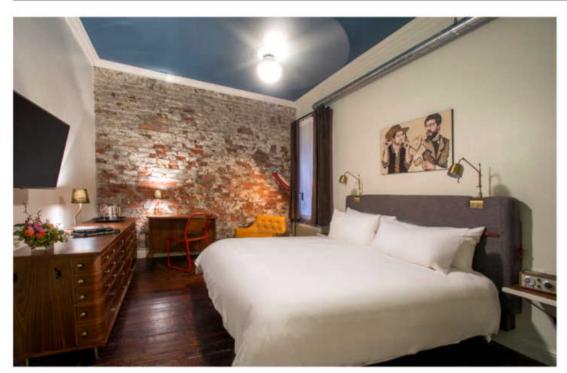
markers — all traditional elements. It's not oversized at 41mm and comes with the ruggedness expected from Rolex, even if the movements inside are industry standard. The fabulous webbing strap is made on the same looms as parachute cord.

It all amounts to a package that has plenty of depth but is no slave to the past. Unsurprisingly, "serious" watch collectors have been all over the Black Bay. At £2,330, it's a relatively cheap thrill for them, but seriously good value for everyone else.









#### Stay ←

New Orleans is lacking in chic boutique hotels; however, our choice of the handful is the new Old No 77 & Chandlery with the exposed brick walls and high-ceilinged rooms expected of a former warehouse. Its Do Not Disturb signs say, "Let's just say things got a little crazy last night and leave it at that," a nice touch in this city. When you do make it downstairs, the ground floor is home to the Tout La espresso bar, a gallery showcasing local artists and the Compère Lapin restaurant and bar, serving mash-up Franco-Italo-Caribbean cooking and killer cocktails. Hair of the dog doesn't often taste this good. old77hotel.com

#### Shop

Party 1

Scrub up like a southern gent at Aidan Gill a venerable barbershop that also sells a range of excellent, classic men's grooming products. aidangillformen.com

#### Drink 4

Boy, is there some choice of where to drink in a city often credited with inventing the cocktail. There's even an official cocktail, the Sazerac - rye whiskey, absinthe and Peychaud's bitters (a New Orleans invention) and sugar cube. It's best enjoyed where it was invented, the Sazerac Bar at the Roosevelt Hotel, Sassy Sazeracs are also available at the Twentiesstyle Arnaud's French 75 bar on Bienville, alongside its own cocktail, the French 75 combo of brandy, lemon and Champagne. therooseveltneworleans.com: arnaudsrestaurant.com

#### Lunch

Lunch in New Orleans often morphs into dinner, and there's nowhere better to enjoy this admirable take on the work/life balance than at Galatoire's, an institution on Bourbon Street in the French Quarter since 1905. They don't take reservations, so get there brunch-early for Friday lunch and settle in to a dining room buzzing with tuxedo-clad waiters. ceiling fans and the South's power players: eat shrimp étouffée and grilled lemon fish and peoplewatch through the huge wall mirrors over a long, long lunch. galatoires.com



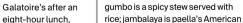
After a Sazerac or three head to Frenchmen Street for the city's funkiest music in clubs such as The Spotted Cat, or just jiving on a street corner to a brass band, drink in hand – a pleasure not permissible in most US cities. The street is also home to the afterdark Frenchmen Art Market, but art appreciation might be a little ambitious by this point in the evening, spottedcatmusicclub. com: frenchmenartmarket.com

Learn your Louisiana cooking lingo:



Dine 1

There is plenty of classic creole and cajun cooking, but the contemporary cuisine scene is on a roll. Chef Phillip Lopez's second opening, Square Root, is all high culinary concept (the first molecular gastronomic experience in town). Pray the cigar box-smoked scallops are on the menu, and order the sommelier's wine choices to complement the spectacular cooking. squarerootnola.com



cousin; po' boys are beef or shrimp which is entirely acceptable). baguettes; muffulettas are sesame bread sandwiches with Italian ham, cheese and olives: beignets are deep-fried choux pastries. There are no direct Why now?

When in...



#### Do ←

The Bayou, It seems a shame to spend any time away from so glorious a city, but the lure of Louisiana's iconic swamps and wetlands should not be resisted. The waterways of the Barataria Preserve are within easy reach - but full of alligators. nps.gov/ jela/barataria-preserve.htm

#### See

Modern art in adversity, thanks to a vivid outpouring of creativity from dozens of local artists post-Katrina. The epicentre of the scene is the Warehouse Art District, with its Contemporary Arts Centre and several excellent galleries on Julia, Camp and Magazine Streets.

#### Get there

Avoid

Being an aimlessly

(usually the worse for

wear) and sticking to

the now completely

stag-do haunt that

(except when exiting

is Bourbon Street

commercialised

wandering tourist

flights, so from the UK fly BA to Dallas/ Fort Worth Texas and then travel onward with American Airlines.



Mardi Gras, bien sûr. The month of mayhem begins in January and culminates on 9 February, traditionally "Fat Tuesday". Do wear a costume, mask and beads; don't expect much sleep.

## Superdry guy

#### Idris Elba has helped make Superdry's new collection a slicker, more stylish affair

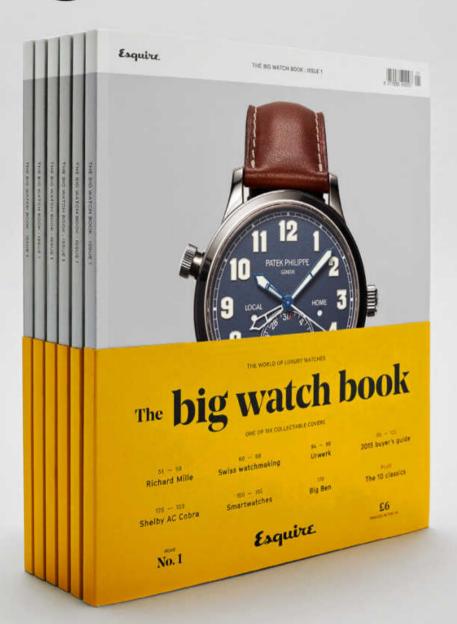
→ For years, casualwear brand Superdry has had the air of being aimed directly at the younger demographic: logo-emblazoned hoodies, pre-ripped denim, collegiate jogging bottoms and checked shirts. Forget all you think you know. For Spring/Summer 2016, the brand has produced a collection of premium quality wardrobe staples fit for any sartorially conscious man. Wool town coats, sleek cashmere knits, simple shirting, selvedge denim and a strong leather jacket all feature. The inspiration for the range? Golden Globe-winning actor Idris Elba. His straightforward signature style resonated with Superdry's co-founders Julian Dunkerton and James Holder, so they invited him into the design studio and put him to work. Fortunately for them, it resonates with us, too. superdry.com





FROM THE PEOPLE BEHIND BRITAIN'S MOST STYLISH AND SOPHISTICATED MEN'S MAGAZINE

# Esquire. The big watch book



## Out now

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**NEW PEUGEOT 308 GTI** 





## Up, down, over and round

Esquire's PT Harry Jameson maps out the ultimate training circuit

→ You know the guy, the one who bangs on about how he's found a new high-intensity, mega-calorie-burning, miraclemuscle-building exercise class — and it only takes 15 minutes! The truth is, as Esquire's personal trainer explains, "circuit training is not new; it's just been repackaged. Despite it being something of a fitness fad, it's a fantastic way to work out, but you don't need to pay crazy hourly rates in an über-cool gym packed with sweaty, heaving bodies. You can create your own circuit that's tailored to your gym, your goals and your pace."

#### The rules

You must warm up and cool down.

Five minutes at a medium pace on the cross-trainer before and after will do fine.

Perform 10-15 reps on each exercise.

If you are feeling really exhausted, just push out as many as you can before moving on.

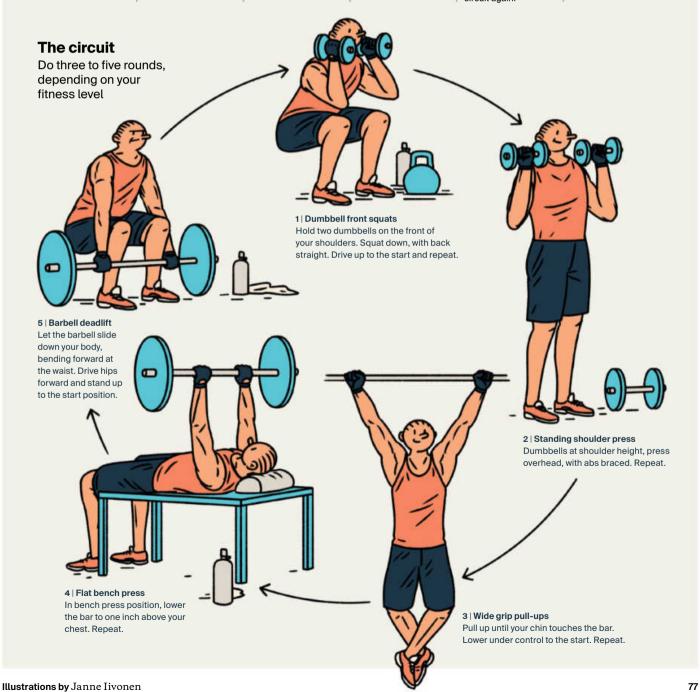
Always strive for a consistent effort.

Try and lift at least 70 per cent of your capability on each exercise.

After each round of exercises vou must run 1km on a treadmill at 80 per cent of your maximum pace. Then rest for 2mins

before repeating the circuit again.

Never continue exercising once your form has gone. That's how you'll accidentally injure





#### Where to stay

The London West Hollywood

In London, the trick is to avoid the tourists. Swerve restaurants in the West End, take a wide berth around Buckingham Palace and avoid Piccadilly Circus at all costs. In West Hollywood, however, it's a different story. The area is home to some of the city's best bars, hotels, venues, restaurants and, frankly, coolest people. The place to stay is The London, just off Sunset Boulevard. Its rooftop pool is one of the most spectacular in the city, and the new Royal Vista suites on the ninth floor have private terraces offering unrivalled views of the Hollywood Hills and the LA skyline. Rather wonderfully, guests also enjoy complimentary calls to London, which is good if you decide to stay on a few extra days. thelondonwesthollywood.com





#### Where to eat

Night + Market

There's lots of Thai food in the city, but not much comes close to that at Night + Market on Sunset Boulevard. Authentic street food is served up in a gloriously kitsch setting. If you don't at least try the fried pig's tail, you're missing out. nightmarketsong.com

#### What to do

Visit the Schindler House

For a cultured diversion, take a look at the Schindler House. Dating from 1922, it's one of the first houses to be built in the modern style and is an island of architectural calm amid the LA madness. makcenter.org

#### Where to drink

**Bar Marmont** 

Chateau Marmont is part of the very fabric of LA, so any stay in West Hollywood demands a stop by. Created by the same team behind Chiltern Firehouse, the bar is grand, dark and just on the suave side of seedy. Try a Sunset Sour, a blend of rye whiskey, orange and lemon juices, with a dash of red wine. chateaumarmont.com





JUST **WILLIAM** 

ESSENTIAL ACCESSORIES FOR MEN

## Your month in menswear

Private pool tables, Paul Smith pens and a sea of navy blue

#### 01 Paul Smith x Caran d'Ache

Let's get straight to the ballpoint

/

Writing instrumentmaker Caran d'Ache has proved over time that Swiss craftsmanship is not reserved for timepieces alone. To celebrate its 100th anniversary, the brand has enlisted British menswear designer Sir Paul Smith to reimagine one of its best-loved designs. the 849 ballpoint. The designer, an admirer of this particular model, has helped create a limited edition collection, in which each of the 10 shades is new and exclusive. "I have used Caran d'Ache pens for many years and to celebrate the company's 100th anniversary, I have selected totally unique colours," Smith says. "I hope you like them." carandache.com





Modern tailoring you can count on

/

The focus for the 1205 brand has always been on quality fabrics, elegant cuts and strong artistry, which comes as no surprise since founder Paula Gerbase (who appears in Esquire's The Big Black Book A/W 2015, out now) started her career on Savile Row. The autumn/winter 2015 collection is an exercise in subtle textures, pared-back suiting, reimagined workwear and lots of navy blue. The big announcement from 1205 is it will be showing for the first time at London Collections Men in January; but even bigger is the news that Gerbase has just launched a made-to-measure suiting service, which we highly recommend checking out. 1205.eu



#### 03 Brooks Brothers

London store cues up an elegant reopening

/

One of the best loved and most archetypal American clothing brands, Brooks Brothers has also been a feature of the British menswear landscape for approaching 10 years now, recognised by its grand flagship store on the corner of London's Regent and Beak Streets. Regular passersby will have noticed its recent closure for refurbishment but - high five, bros - it's open once again, and even better than before. The lower ground floor has been devoted to the brand's menswear ranges, and it's where you'll also find its new dedicated made-to-measure service. Even more enticingly, the interior has been fitted out with a cocktail bar, comfortable Chesterfields and even a cashmere-clad pool table. It's the ultimate man cave, just with better clothes. 150 Regent St, London W1; brooksbrothers.com

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N SUPP B





\*England's all time highest international wicket-taker, 384 test wickets correct at 17 Apr 2015.

Source: www.jamesanderson613.com \*\*UK's No1 men's supplement brand. Source: Nielsen GB ScanTrack
Total Coverage Value Sales 52 w/e 25th April 2015. †Available from larger Boots stores, subject to availability

## The unusual suspects

Four fresh brands to make space for in your wardrobe



#### Sand: outerwear

At Danish company Sand, classic European tailoring is reimagined through a slightly warped prism. Sleek lines and sumptuous fabrics remain, but it might be in the form of a leather shirt, or a silk, leopard-print smoking jacket. You can still find great timeless pieces throughout the collection, though, such as this overcoat.

£500, sandcopenhagen.com

#### Jacob Cohen: denim

Although it boasts outerwear, accessories, casualwear and tailoring, the star turn at Jacob Cohen is its tailored denim, as every pair is handmade in Italy. They are created via a process that uses less water, less energy and no chemicals, so they're just as good for your conscience as your wardrobe.

£480, jacobcohen.it

#### Piquadro: luggage

The philosophy at Piquadro is simple: create business luggage and accessories that are as handsome as they are useful. For the former, it uses the best Italian leathers and most modern technical fabrics; and for the latter it pores over every compartment, pocket, strap and stitch to make sure its bags perform as they should.

£300, piquadro.com

#### Remus Uomo: tailoring

The Irish-founded, Italian-inspired brand specialises in slim-cut, chic tailoring and casualwear. Its autumn/winter 2015 collection hones in on the brand's mantra for "understated sophistication", and is packed full of sumptuous knitwear, well-cut denim and sleek suiting, as this stylish navy jacket proves.

£170, remusuomo.com





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### LANCASTER BOMBER

24 JEWELS / SELF-WINDING AUTOMATIC AV-4038











to welcome 2016

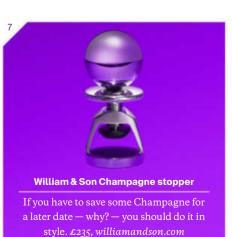




→ It's tough, we know. Those lost, sombre days that constitute the beginning of each new year will soon be upon us. Darkness, cold and rain. So. Much. Rain. But wait, there is light at the end of the tunnel, and it's coming from the warm glow you'll feel from getting your chilblained hands on some hot new technology. Including touch-sensitive speakers, a high-end "lap-tablet", a 16-lens camera and an app to make you sit up straight, here are 10 techy reasons why 2016 will be all right after all.









### PASSIONATE ABOUT WATCHES



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# Culture

FILM / MUSIC / BOOKS / TELEVISION / ART





Rude elf: the seasonal offering from Modern Toss (left) contains strong language and even stronger laughs



→ Two fat men, ugly as tinsel, with faces like collapsed cakes, stand facing each other, as if about to fight. One holds a glass of — presumably — wine (possibly mulled). The other a cigarette. Both are wearing paper party crowns. From their clothes — wide lapels, flared trousers, Cuban heels — we can guess it's the early Seventies, somewhere in provincial England. A speech bubble above the first man's head reads: "I hear Peter's having goose for Christmas." Second man: "Peter's a fucking ponce."

Here at Esquire we don't particularly care to know why it is we find the work of Modern Toss — the artists otherwise known as Mick Bunnage and Jon Link — so funny. We just do. It makes us laugh. It's subversive and irreverent and rude and also weirdly warm and affectionate, and consoling. No doubt you could analyse the work more

## Modern Toss's new book is a corrective to false festive bonhomie, forced fun and mortifying family and business gatherings

forensically than that, and come up with some deep-seated trauma in our childhoods and theirs that predisposes us to enjoy cartoons in which bitter scribbles swear at each other. But that would make you a fucking ponce, like Peter.

Modern Toss's new book, *Complete Christmas Mood*, is a necessary corrective to false festive bonhomie, forced fun and mortifying family and business gatherings. It contains gags about seasonal suicide,

crap presents, gruesome office parties and incontinence.

One more before we go. Same two horrible fat blokes, standing in the middle of a party under the headline "Cheese & Wine". First one says: "So, do you think we'll get any snow this year?" Second one: "How the fuck should I know?"

Complete Christmas Mood is out now, moderntoss.com



## And the Oscar goes to...

WHICH 2015 MOVIES HAVE WHAT IT TAKES TO WOO THE ACADEMY? LET OUR GUIDE DECIDE

		HISTORICAL CIVIL RIGHTS DRAMA?	BASED ON A TRUE STORY?	WITH CONTEMPORARY RESONANCE?	ABOUT A FAMOUS PERSON?
	1. SUFFRAGETTE	In Edwardian London, working-class women put their lives on the line to win the vote. So, yes.	"Inspired by the women who inspired the world."	Don't you read The Guardian's Comment Is Free?	Carey Mulligan plays a fictional figure, but veteran Academy fave Meryl Streep shows up as Emmeline Pankhurst.
2.	2. LEGEND	Historical, certainly.	The "notorious true story" of the Kray twins, according to the poster.	Only if you're in formal menswear (which we are).	Two, as it goes. "Legendary" East End gangsters Ronnie and Reggie, both played by Tom Hardy.
	3. TRUMBO	Screenwriter Dalton Trumbo refuses to take anti-communist Hollywood blacklisting quietly.	Yep, just like Trumbo's Spartacus.	You try being a screenwriter in these days of reactionary right-wing fearmongering.	Famous in Hollywood (which is what matters).
4.	4. STEVE JOBS	lf you're Jobs's ex-wife and daughter.	Walter Isaacson's version of it.	Especially for those of us who recently downloaded iOS9.	Not just famous, a "visionary genius" who "changed the world".
	5. THE DANISH GIRL	Eddie Redmayne plays the first ever male-to-female transsexual.	Inspired by the "extraordinary true story", actually.	Transgender tales could not be more current.	Missed a trick there.
	6. CAROL	Not far off: a lesbian affair between a married woman and a store clerk in Fifties New York.	No — based on Patricia Highsmith's novel. That's right: someone actually made all this up! Amazing!	Well, they don't mention the possibility of same-sex marriage, but their struggle is hardly unrelated.	No!
	7. BRIDGE OF SPIES	Cold War espionage thriller from Steven Spielberg.	You betcha, of humble Bronx-born lawyer (Tom Hanks) who negotiates a spy-swap with Soviets.	"Contemporary things were in my mind," says Spielberg. "Drones. Guantanamo Bay. Cyberhacking"	Prancis Gary Powers, the U-2 pilot shot down over Russia in 1960.
	8. THE REVENANT	Period frontier drama; reportedly "hell" for the actors. So someone's civil rights – and how did the bears feel?	Yes, of a fur trapper played by Leonardo Di Caprio, left for dead after being mauled by a bear.	Fur-trapping? Not so much.	No.
5.	9. SPOTLIGHT	How The Boston Globe's investigative team uncovered the paedophile priests scandal in 2002.	Yes it is: see previous answer for details.	Absolutely.	Only God, who is mentioned often.
	IO. THE HATEFUL EIGHT	Yes, but without the "civil rights" bit — an omission many had a problem with in Quentin Tarantino's Django Unchained.	Heck no!	Only on the soundtrack.	No.

2

Last year's Best Actor Oscar went to Benedict Cumberbatch for his spookily lifelike portrayal of the legendary President of England Daniel Day-Lewis in the mercilessly unflinching world historical civil rights biopic *The Theory of Redmayne*, co-starring tragic Facenet founder Julianne Moore as Cate Blanchett,

flawed visionary AIDS activist Sean Penn, and Forties single mom Dame Helen Mirren as herself, if she had a stammer. (Which she doesn't. Because the awards are for ACTING.) So, who's going to win what this year? Using the newly patented *Esquire* Oscar Bait Algorithm, we weigh up the assets of the likely contenders.

WHO DEMC COURAI INTEGRIT APPAI CONDI	Y UNDER LING	WHILE SUFFERING A DEBILITATING ILLNESS?	EVIDENCE OF VISIONARY GENIUS?	MERYL / CATE / JULIANNE?	BEST LINE FROM THE TRAILER	6.
Not 'arf.		Death by horse.	Did we mention Meryl Streep's in it?	Meryl <i>and</i> Helena Bonham Carter.	"Shut yer bleedin' cake 'ole!"	
On second th this isn't goir any Oscars, i	g to win	One of them was a psychopath. The other didn't have that excuse.	What did you say, you slag?	Not even Anne- Marie Duff.	"Me and my bruvver, we're gonna rule Lahndan."	7.
Serves II mor prison rather rat out his po	than	Communism.	If you include writing the script for <i>Roman</i> Holiday (and we do), then certainly.	Mirren.	"He's a genius!"	
His colleague against that ego, would to they did.	monstrous	Jobs died of cancer, aged 56.	We'd prefer a Genius Bar appointment.	Even better: Winslet.	"The most tectonic shift in the status quo since ever!"	8.
Undergoes w first sex char with Twenties technology.	ige op	No, but certainly with emotional and physical issues beyond what most of us could conceive.	Clever wig.	Isn't Eddie enough? Plus foxy newcomer Alicia Vikander as Mrs Lily.	"You're different from most girls."	
Just a bit. Se same-sex aff America = tri	air in Fifties	No, although all that smoking can't have been healthy.	Only in the costume department.	Cate!	"She's still my wife! And I love her!"	2
Spielberg: "T be a lot hard a man that w up for his prii	er to find ould stand	Cold War paranoia.	Jaws, ET, Jurassic Park.	Hanks.	"The next mistake our governments make could be the last one."	
Bears. Cold.	Mauling.	Is being mauled by a bear debilitating? You bet your ass it is.	Choosing fur-trapping as a career must be low on any list of bright-spark moments.	Only one woman in the cast: Grace Dove Syme, Canadian aboriginal actress, playing Mrs Leo.	"I ain't afraid to die — I done it already."	
These journo admirably te		Sickness among the clergy and church hierarchy.	This one's about perspiration, not inspiration.	Rachel McAdams, whose name anagrams from their full names. Apart from the 'd'.	"I know there's things you cannot tell me, but I also know there's a story here."	10.
No.		No.	You decide.	Michael, Kurt, Jennifer (Madsen, Russell, Jason-Leigh).	"Woo-hoo! Now we're talking!"	



Creatures of the Night: Suede, (below, from left) Richard Oakes, Simon Gilbert, Brett Anderson, Mat Osman, Neil Codling





## Nocturnal editions

SUEDE RETURN TO AUDIO AND VISUAL FORM

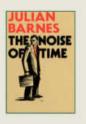
It's so old-fashioned it's positively cutting-edge: Suede's new album was made, says singer Brett Anderson, to be listened to "in order and all the way to the end". But this is an era in which a band cannot live by album sales alone, so Night Thoughts, the band's seventh, comes with a feature-length film by photographer Roger Sargent. (A DVD of the Night Thoughts film forms part of three of the five retail options for this record.)

The visuals acted as a backdrop to the band's two sold-out gigs at London's Roundhouse in November, and are more successful as a movie-for-an-album than, say, Daft Punk's mad manga for *Discovery*. It's easy to forget, with the stranglehold Blur and Oasis retain over Britpop's official history, how stunning Suede could be: combining pop savvy with urban melancholy and androgynous mystique as well as anyone since The Smiths. Two decades on, Anderson's vocal is even more haunting for being a fraction less powerful, and his band still do a fine turn.

Night Thoughts is out on 22 January

## Communist symphonies

THINK FOLLOWING UP A BOOKER PRIZE-WINNER IS TOUGH? TRY BEING A COMPOSER IN SOVIET RUSSIA



Julian Barnes has never been afraid of tackling the big issues. Most recently his 2011 Man Booker Prize-winning *The Sense of an Ending* explored love, truth, memory and happiness, and prompted one of the Booker judges to describe Barnes as "an unparalleled magus of the heart".

His much-anticipated follow-up,
The Noise of Time, takes aim at a similarly
imposing set of themes; namely the interplay

between art and power, and the nature of human courage, explored through the life of Soviet-era composer Dmitri Shostakovich.

The impossibility of Shostakovich's predicament becomes increasingly clear. He is sent on a tour of America as an example of Soviet musical supremacy despite his work being suppressed in Russia, and is at one point assigned a hapless tutor sent by the Party to "educate him" in the principles of Marxism-

Leninism. Throughout, he resists joining the Party, a situation that becomes ever more untenable. In *The Noise of Time*, Shostakovich (or Barnes) likens life in Stalinist Russia to a "catalogue of little farces adding up to an immense tragedy". The same could be said for this densely written, masterfully told tale.

The Noise of Time (Jonathan Cape) is out on 28 January



"Can you see who it is yet?": Bernard Buffet (below) with wife Annabel in 1962, and (bottom) his paintings Clown Fond Jaune (1985) and Clown au Chapeau Claque (1986)

### A brush with fame

THE LIFE OF FRANCE'S 'LAST TRULY GREAT PAINTER'



Bernard Buffet, says his biographer Nick Foulkes, died 40 years too late. Had the French painter taped a plastic bag over his head in 1959 instead of 1999, as he did aged 71, "he would," Foulkes writes, "have gone to his grave lauded as the last truly great painter produced by France... whose commercial success and critical acclaim looked to put him on a collision course with Picasso." As Foulkes recounts, with skill and a sense of fun lacking in many artist biogs,

mid-century Buffet was too full of the joys of life to consider ending it: global fame and critical acclaim, money, lovers of both sexes. Foulkes finds a seat for Buffet at modern art's top table, and is especially good at evoking Fifties and Sixties French culture, with all the cigarette smoke, beautiful people and *Paris-Match* style it deserves.

Bernard Buffet: the Invention of a Modern Megaartist (Preface) by Nick Foulkes is out on 14 January









Moptop shots: Norman Parkinson's new book (left) captures The Beatles on the way up in September 1963. George Harrison and John Lennon recording (below)

### Abbey snaps

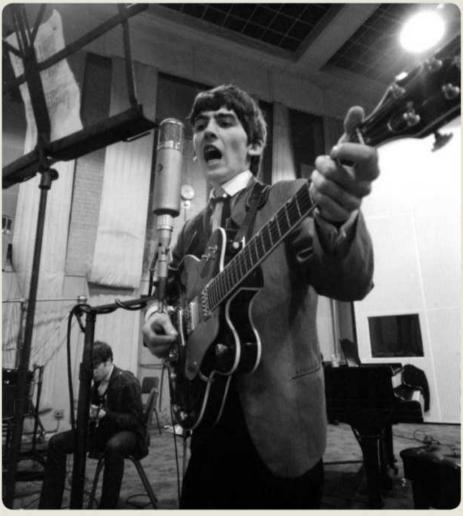
A DAY IN THE LIVES

Beatles geeks rejoice: a hitherto-unseen archive of photographs by the late Norman Parkinson, one of the greatest portrait and fashion photographers of the 20th century, has been unearthed. The results, unsurprisingly, are fab.

The society photographer spent time with John, Paul, George and Ringo on September 12, 1963, and his "snaps" (as he referred to his work) capture the band at London's President Hotel and inside Studio 2 at Abbey Road Studios, as they record their second album With The Beatles — which would become the second-ever album to sell a million in the UK (after the South Pacific soundtrack).

The photographs, compiled for the first time in a lavishly produced book aptly titled Norman Parkinson with The Beatles, come from original negatives in Parkinson's personal archive, and offer a wonderfully unguarded glimpse of the band in their ascendancy. Within months, Beatlemania was sweeping the UK and the US would soon follow, along with the rest of planet Earth. Of course, in 1968 they released "Ob-La-Di, Ob-La-Da", but nobody's perfect.

Norman Parkinson with The Beatles (Rufus) is out in February



### Cream of the small screen

ONE MAN'S QUEST TO BRING YOU THE BEST TV SHOWS YOU'VE NEVER HEARD OF



Italian TV exec Walter Iuzzolino had a fine career making shows, but at the beginning of 2014, he packed it all in to become a full-time telly-watcher. "Eight hours each day for about 18 months," he says. "You just stick at it." But this epic binge had purpose: by avoiding the main fishing waters of US cable shows, quality UK drama and Scandinavian crime, Iuzzolino was able to pitch a best-of-the-rest-of-the-world

channel to Channel 4. They loved the idea as much as they loved his enthusiasm for the programmes, and thus was born Walter Presents, a hub for all the great TV you've never heard of, complete with filmed intros from the man himself. Particularly good are: German Cold War spy drama Deutschland 83 (left); Match Day, a French murdermystery in the world of lower-league football: The Lens, from the Czech Republic,

about an elite crime unit cameraman; backroom political thriller *Spin*, also from France; and *Blue Eyes*, an ultra-topical Swedish show about the rise of the far right. What's even better is that all these, bar *Spin*, are mini-series. Here is a curated home for quality TV that won't lead to box-set fatigue. Grazie, Walter.

Walter Presents is online on All4 in January

Snow joke: Will Poulter (below right) suffers for his art in *The Revenant* 

## Where there's a Will

MEET THE BRIT MAKING HIS NAME IN HOLLYWOOD THE HARD WAY

In seven years, London-born actor Will Poulter has gone from starring in cult C4 sketch shows (School Of Comedy) to winning a Bafta, kissing Jennifer Aniston (in 2013's We're the Millers) and working alongside Leonardo DiCaprio and Tom Hardy in Birdman director Alejandro González Iñárritu's fur-trapper drama The Revenant — released this January. And, at just 22 years old, his career is only just beginning...

## Esquire: Much has been said about *The Revenant*'s troubled shoot. Was it as tough as has been reported?

WILL POULTER: It was the toughest thing I've ever done. I can honestly say that. ESO: How so?

WP: It's because we were hit with the worst weather imaginable. Beforehand, Alejandro sat us all down and told us it was going to be hard and asked us to trust him; he said it'd be worth it for the outcome of the film. Ultimately, he was right.

**ESQ:** Would you work with him again? WP: Oh, if Alejandro asked me to do another film with him tomorrow morning, I'd sign



up. For me, he's the greatest director working in the business.

### ESQ: There was, presumably, some downtime. What did you do?

**WP:** There was a *lot* of downtime — we were in remote locations [including the Canadian Rockies] so it was great to be working with such a fantastic group of guys. There was a lot of poker. I lost a lot of Canadian dollars. **ESQ:** You've done drama and comedy.

ESQ: You've done drama and comedy.

Do you have a preference?

**WP:** One of my biggest influences growing up was Robin Williams. I thought he was

the funniest guy ever, but I always much preferred his dramatic roles. I'm enjoying doing dramas at the minute myself.

ESQ: Which were you more nervous about: working with DiCaprio or kissing Aniston?

WP: I wondered when this was going to come up... It was more strange because I respect both of them so much; I was a huge fan of Leo's growing up and I watched Friends all the time — so to find myself kissing Jennifer in that tent was weird.

The Revenant is out on 15 January

### Game without frontiers

THE WITNESS HAS BEEN SEVEN YEARS IN THE MAKING. IT MAY TAKE YOU EVEN LONGER TO COMPLETE

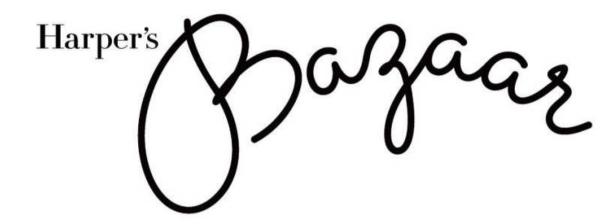


Seven years of development is unusual for any video game — the vast *Grand Theft Auto V* took four years to make — but you can't knock the creator of *The Witness*, Jonathan Blow, when he says, "as long as it looked like we were going to have the money and time to make this thing, we decided to make it the best thing we could." His "thing" has rare appeal for

both casual gamers and explorers of the open-worlds in GTA, Assassin's Creed and the Batman: Arkham series. Turn it on; you're in a cave on an island; a maze-like puzzle becomes apparent; you solve it and progress across the landscape to another. A further 600-plus puzzles lie ahead, some of which Blow says only one per cent of players will solve, but not all of

which must be cracked to reach an endpoint. Playing through The Witness is not just a numbers game: as hundreds of satisfying "Yes!" moments are racked up, there's a real sense of them flowing together to make a grander, deeper whole. That's mightily impressive.

The Witness is out on 26 January



# THE PERFECT GIFT FOR CHRISTMAS

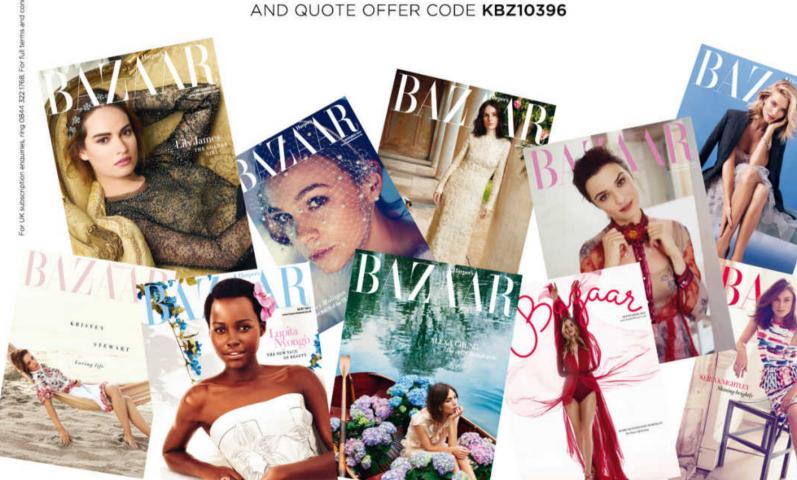
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Orchestral manoeuvres: Michael Caine (below) plays a reclusive composer in Paolo Sorrentino's Youth



### Hats off to the maestros

BRAVO TO PAOLO SORRENTINO, DIRECTOR OF THIS MONTH'S YOUTH, AND TO MICHAEL CAINE'S MILLINER

He enters from behind, so to speak, his enormous back to the screen, revealing a gigantic tattoo of Karl Marx's face. It's not actually Diego Maradona (the actor is called, appropriately, Roly Serrano) but you could be forgiven for making that mistake: he's a dead ringer for the Argentine superstar, albeit even fatter and sadder, and *Youth* is a Paolo Sorrentino film, so when it comes to the distinctions between dreams and reality, all bets are off.

Sorrentino is the Neapolitan maestro responsible for *Il Divo*, *This Must Be the Place* and the Oscar-winning *The Great Beauty*. His movies are stylish, surrealist meditations on love and regret, sex and death, age and beauty. They are chic and vulgar, moving and silly, gorgeous and grotesque, sublime and ridiculous. You know — like life. Plus the clothes are always

great; Michael Caine's collection of tweed bucket hats in this one ought to win the costume Oscar on their own.

Maradona might not be real but there are other eye-catching cameos — Jane Fonda as a frosty, faded film star; a game Paloma Faith (that's Paloma Faith) as, erm, Paloma Faith; an eye-popping turn from the Romanian model Madalina Ghenea as Miss Universe — as well as strong performances from Paul Dano as a questing movie star; Rachel Weisz, fierce and formidable as a woman scorned and shot by Sorrentino like an Italian movie star of the Sixties; and Harvey Keitel [see p124] as a famous film director in search of his lost mojo.

But this is Caine's film. With wit and delicacy he plays a retired composer and conductor, drolly austere in his beautifully tailored suits, with his lustrous snow-white

hair, marooned at an exclusive spa resort in the foothills of the Swiss Alps, from where he fends off requests from the Queen, no less, to perform his most famous work for Prince Philip, who "listens to nothing else".

Caine is 82 now. There is an argument to be made that he's the real maestro in this film full of them. But who cares about real? Sorrentino's interested in the nature of art, the beauty of nature, the history of film — his wild shifts in tone, his images at once painterly and soft-pornographic, mark him out as one of the most gifted and distinctive film-makers working today. His next project is a TV series, *The Young Pope*, with Jude Law as the pontiff and Diane Keaton his confessor. No word yet on the participation of a certain former number 10 for Napoli.

Youth is out on 29 January

outh words by Alex Bilmes

## In their own style

An Esquire appreciation



Camera Press | Eyevine | Mark Webb/Retna | Rex

LAST MONTH IN ESQUIRE, Noel Gallagher complained that the trouble with rock'n'roll these days is that "it's all about the clothes". We know what he was driving at: too many contemporary pop personages think all you need is the skinny jeans and the tousled hair, and surely the hits will follow. But still, Noel's statement started us thinking: wasn't rock'n'roll *always* all about the clothes, even when everyone concerned was pretending it really wasn't?

Oh, sure, there are other important elements: sex and drugs and guitars. But if

rock'n'roll is (or, at least, was) also about style and subversion, about reinvention and rebellion, about living outside the narrow confines of polite society, then clothes must surely play (or have played) a crucial part. From Little Richard to Kanye West, what our pop stars wear speaks as loudly as anything they say, or sing.

Which isn't to say rock'n'roll is about fashion. (That's what Noel was really getting at.) In part, rock'n'roll is a rejection of fashion, but a rejection made by people who put a lot of thought into what they're wearing,

even when it might not look like it. Over the next ten pages we tip our hats to five men who, in quite different ways, made powerful statements with their clothes, from the almost comical suavity of Bryan Ferry to the casual peacockery of Mick Jagger, the chameleonic androgyny of David Bowie to the studied, urchin-like aggression of John Lydon and the scruffy beauty of his spiritual successor, Kurt Cobain.

Note: this is an appreciation, not a recommendation. In other words, don't try this at work, kids.





Terry O'Neill/Getty I Richard Imrie/Camera Press I Barry Schultz/Camera Press I Electric Shock: 125 Years of Pop Music (The Bodley Head) by Peter Doggett is out now



Ch-ch-ch-ch-changes: from left, Bowie in Los Angeles in the summer of 1974, while working on Young Americans; post-Ziggy Stardust, pre-Diamond Dogs, circa 1973; back from Berlin, punk showing its influence, around the time of Heroes, circa 1978



## **David Bowie**

### Peter Doggett

Believe It or not, there was a time when David Bowie wasn't cool. You can find mystery in any man, but genuine mystique demands the ability to pass yourself off as an enigma. The same distinction divides ephemeral fashion from eternal style. To prove the point, the teenage Bowie mirrored every shift of image that the rapidly evolving Sixties pop scene demanded. You could map the decade through his transformation from beat to mod, or Carnaby Street peacock to Notting Hill hippy. Through it all, however, Sixties Bowie was echoing the outside world, not shaping it. He was contemporary, but never cool.

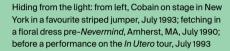
Stale from his schooling, the teenage Bowie had endured a reluctant year in the lowly echelons of a London advertising agency. There he learned the potency of image, watching as copywriters and designers conjured glamour out of naked commercialism. What was missing from his early efforts to reproduce this sleight of hand in his own career was a sense of conviction. He found it only when the counterculture decayed into hopelessness and ennui as the Seventies began. Aware before most of his peers that the Sixties dream was over, Bowie reinvented himself as a prophet of doom, with a gospel of salvation: an androgynous rock'n'roll alien named Ziggy Stardust. Unable to locate stardom by traditional means, he declared himself a superstar — and a generation rushed to acclaim him as its messiah.

Bowie was now his own creation, able to mould his audience in his own image. Throughout the Seventies, he subjected his psyche to the relentless, perilous pursuit of change, each mutation of sound and image offered with a beguiling mixture of utter certainty and total vulnerability. Contradictions became his compelling stock-in trade: he was intensely serious and disarmingly flippant; instinctively spontaneous and carefully calculating; open to chance and creativity, yet concealing himself at every turn.

Through that frantic, insane decade, Bowie alighted upon the key elements of cool. Here was a man who always knew more than we did; who could invite us into his world while maintaining a stern distance; who could refashion himself as a dandy or a *Clockwork Orange* droog, clad in Japanese jumpsuit or catwalk suit, while convincing his audience that each fleeting image was the only possible response to a landscape mired in chaos and confusion.

Having barely survived the Seventies, Bowie thereafter opted for self-preservation over existential quest. But his sense of certainty, of effortless ease, his untouchable aura - they remained intact. And they have merely been heightened by the past decade, when he has been hidden in plain sight, nurturing a marriage and a family in Manhattan, and choosing the school run over the concert stage. Place him in front of a camera, though, and the old Bowie remains intact. (It doesn't hurt that he has always known how to wear a suit.) He still faces the lens with the utter assurance of a man who knows his own mind; whose slightly ironic gaze seems to offer incalculable secrets, dangled tantalisingly out of reach. His cool no longer exists only in the eye of his beholder: it's become who he is, the token of his flawless wizard's spell.







## **Kurt Cobain**

### Jon Savage

LIKE MANY GENERATION-DEFINING performers, Kurt Cobain was a shape-shifter par excellence. In the pictures, as in his music, he is a constantly mobile, ever-changing presence. The look changes from long hair to short hair, from clean-shaven to bearded, from bruised to furious, from cleareyed to an occluded gaze, from stoner kid to rock star: but the image is always subservient to the feeling. If pop is all about distilled emotions, then Cobain was so immersed in those waters that his preternatural ability to transmit went hand in hand with a dangerous lack of distance.

Cobain was blessed, if only he'd known it, with extreme good looks: wide blue eyes, blonde hair, fine cheekbones. As he travelled through the byways of America's alternative culture, he changed his appearance to deny that genetic inheritance: he didn't feel handsome, so he disguised his face with badly applied make-up, week-old stubble, lanky

hair. In this guise, he blended in with the crowd, a matter both of personal psychology and peer pressure in an aggressively egalitarian subculture.

What's fascinating about Cobain is how his appearance changed in 1991, on the brink of success. Suddenly, he is beautiful: the scraps of torn clothes have become an aesthetic, while the lack of beard reveals the cheekbones. Shedding the trappings of anonymity, he looks like what he is on the cusp of becoming: a superstar. For a few months, he steps up to the role with a colourful montage of thrift store clothing — pyjama tops, ratty alpaca cardigans, ripped and patched jeans — and a shorter, styled haircut. He is androgynous and resplendent.

Once the full impact of *Nevermind* hit, the problems started. Cobain attempted to use his appearance as a baffle but just as often he couldn't help but reveal, through his self-consciousness, the turmoil that lay underneath. A January 1992 photo session with Michael Lavine showed him nodding out on heroin, his long hair dyed red and his face scowling. It's such a shocking image that it's almost a kind of manifesto, a statement of

intent: his withdrawal from the demands of celebrity and stardom starts here.

From then on, the image becomes inescapable from biography: decline interspersed with periods of clarity and reconnection. In Jesse Frohman's iconic July 1993 picture of America's hottest rock star, a young man of 26 stands hunched, scrunched. His features are almost totally obscured by a hunting hat, deep stubble and a beard. The viewer's eyes are directed to the white, Sixties shades which look like insect eyes, acting as a substitute for the real things. The glare is intense but Cobain is hiding from the light.

Like John Lennon in the mid-Sixties, Cobain all too nakedly reflected the strains and stresses of superstardom in an ever changing image. He recast the rock star for a new age, being frankly androgynous — in that most macho of arenas, American rock — and being unafraid to promote the feminine, the outsider, the damaged and the lost. His ambiguous appearance, together with his extraordinary, innate fashion sense, was as much a marker of this new era as Nirvana's music: at the time, it was inspirational, and time only deepens the sense of waste and loss.

Anwar Hussein/Getty | Peter Sanders/Getty | Lichfield/Getty | Rook Stars Stole my Life: A Big Bad Love Affair with Music (Coronet) by Mark Ellen is out now





Jagger's edge: from left, elegantly detached on tour in Vienna, September 1973; on stage in Hyde Park, July 1969; getting hitched to Bianca in St Tropez, May 1971

## Mick Jagger

#### By Mark Ellen

A GIANT, MECHANICAL lotus flower creaked open on the Earls Court stage, "Honky Tonk Women" clanking from within it, and a rakish figure leapt out in a ruched satin jacket, crimson strides and a floor-length silk scarf that swung above our heads in the second row. I'd never seen Mick Jagger in the flesh and I felt breathless, almost winded.

The word "cool" would have undersold him in 1976. He cruised at a level of unimaginable gorgeousness, a head-swimming symbol of all that was dissolute and desirable. He seemed to have stepped directly from the fleshpots of Babylon, louche and foppish but hell-bent on revelry. He looked snake-like, acquisitive, rapacious, insatiable. Every inch of him roared rebellion — the glitter, the paleblue eyeliner, the pouting lips, the arrogant strut that dissolved occasionally into a cartoonish, multi-limbed blur of pretend panic.

The clothes he wore back then were calculated to traumatise anyone over the age of 40, a voguish glam-rock androgyny shot through with powerful echoes of the past, the silk shirts and frock-coats summoning the bohemian flair of Baudelaire — the man who declared "all pleasure lies in evil" — and the fey, smouldering charisma of the kind of Romantic poet who spent his downtime divinely composed upon a chaiselongue swigging a phial of laudanum. In fact, when Jagger read extracts from Shelley's Adonais at the Hyde Park wake for his band's founder-member Brian Jones seven years earlier, he was wearing what could best be described as a blouse: so far ahead of the male curve he was threatening.

The way he dressed captured a moment in time, a game-changing era when the upwardly mobile lower-middle-class rock stars met the rich-but-slumming-it daughters of the aristocracy and squired them around town, forming a new brand of crossclass alliance. For the girls, a high-profile, scrubbed-up bit of rough; for the boys, a moneyed and press-magnetising bit of posh. Everything Jagger wore back then had elements of the elite world he was entering — the floral shirts, the gemstones, the

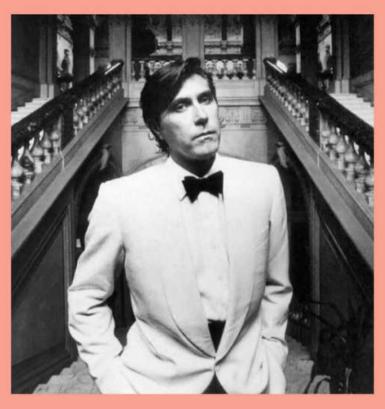
blazers, the Panama hats, the cream suits and watch-chains, the extravagant rings. When he hooked up with Marianne Faithfull—in the blinding way of any golden couple—they became twice the sum of their parts, an effect even further enhanced when he married the girl the press routinely dubbed "the Nicaraguan firecracker". In one unforgettable wedding picture taken in the back of their Roller, Bianca seemed barely clad and Mick appeared frozen in closed-eyed ecstasy with a champagne bottle clamped between his thighs.

Of course, the incandescence he's sustained for five long decades is now expressed differently. He still favours the top end but with the edges artfully distressed (a Hemingway suit with a T-shirt and trainers). Which is fitting as that sense of cool has modified, too, the apparent abandon of his reckless past exchanged for fierce control and the relentless scrutiny of his professional life.

Happily so: if he'd stayed the same, The Rolling Stones would now be playing clubs instead of stadia and we'd have someone else's picture on the cover of *Esquire*.



He got game: Ferry on the tennis court at his home. 1976; rocking the iconic white Antony Price tuxedo, 1974; perfecting the archetypal designer-clad, gentleman-of-the-world crooner look. 1982



## **Bryan Ferry**

#### By Simon Mills

You should never meet your heroes — mainly because their clothes are so awful. Off-duty, deprived of stylists, image consultants and complimentary designer clobber, rock stars, in particular, tend to be disappointing slouches. Not Bryan Ferry.

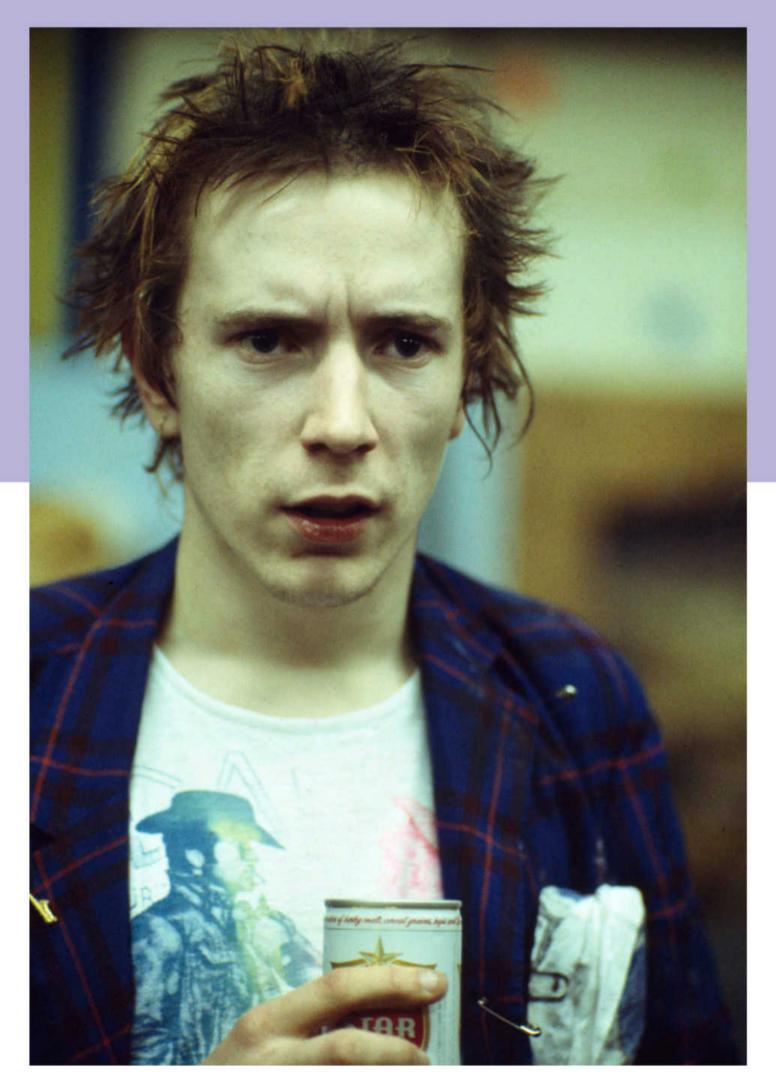
Ferry's enthusiasm for sartorial style is the result of a lifelong obsession with clothing as pop culture costume. Ferry in person, wherever one encounters him, is a bespoke event, a louche ensemble of elegant affectations; he aims to appear filmic, aristocratic, aloof. His style spans five decades, from the Bill Haley-does-*The-Jetsons* prog-glam of early Roxy Music, through the iconic, Antony Price-designed GI uniform of Roxy's *Viva!* period and the white tux of the *Another Time*, *Another Place* solo album cover, right up to his recent thing for Hedi Slimane.

Not that Ferry is always immaculate. Achieving dry-cleaned perfection would be considered shop-window-dummy naff in his eyes. Often there will be something raffish, romantic and slightly foxed about his ensemble. And that's just his shirt collars. At black tie occasions, his dinner jacket will be perfectly cut but perhaps with a slightly worn lapel and in an intentionally unfashionable style. It wouldn't do to look "new". At a cocktail party, his Comme des Garçons blazer will be set off with Berluti shoes and a neck tie knotted to primary schoolboy shortness; Ferry has them custom made to his own curtailed specifications by Charvet in Paris.

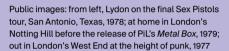
Growing up in the North East, Ferry was fascinated by the Yankee dandysim of zoot suits and the velvet-trimmed, Edwardian garb of Teddy Boys. Half a century on, his own magnificent hair still has the vaguely unsavoury thrill of a fairground greaser. Smoothly remodelling himself as an art school modernist, Ferry became fascinated by Tour de France cyclists; the hetero-camp and fetishistic erotica of the Weimar Republic; the cut, buttons and epaulettes of military get-ups. Ferry, as Michael Bracewell points out in his excellent book *Re-make/Re-model*, he would "always be interested in the potential of uniforms as stylistic statements."

Bracewell also correctly points out that for someone whose look is so steeped in the nebulous idea of "good taste", Ferry adores vulgarity and kitsch, such anti-style aesthetics "serving to frame and sharpen the decorum and poise of his other aesthetic enthusiasms, adding the vital grit to what otherwise might have been merely a rather precious assimilation of good taste."

Now 70, he's toned down the kitsch and vulgarity but can still rock a fashion-forward Gucci dinner jacket on stage. Photographs show that for his Turks and Caicos wedding to Amanda Sheppard in 2012, Ferry gave it the full Marcello Mastroianni in a dark blue suit by Anderson & Sheppard and Tom Ford sunglasses. A year previously, when he went to Buckingham Palace to pick up his CBE, he matched his tailcoat with almost outrageous black and grey striped trews. And that shot above of Ferry in tennis whites? As someone who has actually played a few sets with him at his West Sussex country pile, I can confirm that the Roxy Music frontman has a mean backhand slice and wears unbranded shorts that are cut with the precision of Savile Row breeches.









## John Lydon

#### By Andrew Harrison

IF YOU WANT TO KNOW where Johnny Rotten came from, don't rely on anachronistic documentaries about strikes and the dole and Thatcher. Instead watch the original 1967 Peter Cook and Dudley Moore movie Bedazzled, and specifically the scene (it's on YouTube) where comedian Cook performs as Spock-haired pop star Drimble Wedge. Brilliantly blank, studiously remote and almost motionless, Cook radiates a contempt for the entire bogus pop business that's all the more potent for his obdurate lack of animation.

You'll recognise someone in the stare, the stance and the unsettling lyrics: "You fill me with INERRRTIA." It's John Lydon, Johnny Rotten, Sex Pistol and future butter salesman, pop's own nightmare child. This was style as anti-style, persona as anti-persona.

Lydon acknowledges a debt to Peter Cook, a fellow master of chaos, but of course there's much more to the Rotten/Lydon look. Appearing in 1976 as a tabloid

outrage as much as a music proposition, Johnny Rotten was a Pandora's box of British fears. Here was a drape-suited, Fifties rock'n'roller fallen into hideous, grinning decay - fear the Walking Ted - and a Bash Street Kid come to life, gleefully vandalising his clothes and hair like a phone box or a bog wall. Here, too, was a modern Richard III, a stooped and scheming anti-hero in trousers like calipers who gave succour to everyone not born to the beautiful people. Lydon/Rotten remains one of very few pop artists - see Bowie, Kate Bush, Morrissey - where the style and the art are indivisible. You could not sing these songs, or say these things, looking any other way.

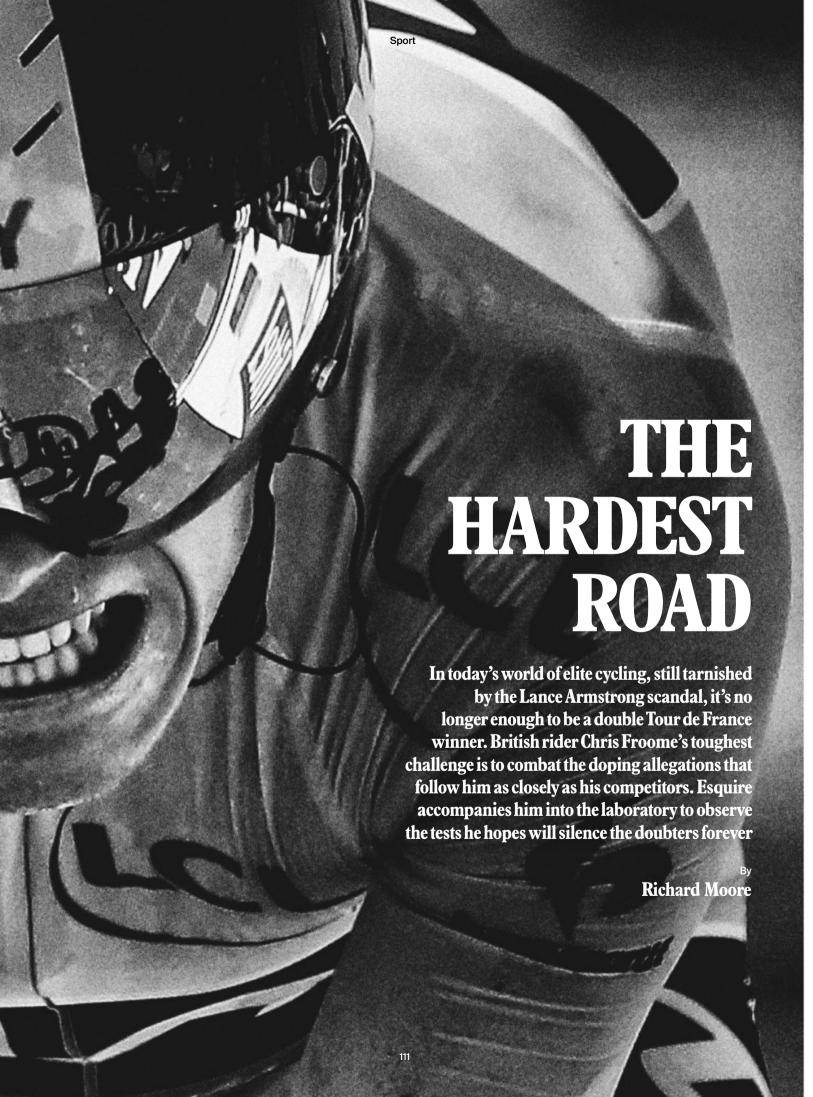
There were reasons for this. A childhood bout of spinal meningitis had left Lydon with a permanently curved back, a piercing glare and agonising headaches. An upbringing among the dirt-poor London Irish made him an outsider both in County Cork, where his mother came from, and at home in then-deprived Islington. Congenitally unsuited for employment, Lydon instead revelled in his wrongness. From a Dickensian childhood, he forged a Dickensian

self, an untouchable urchin king beyond the reach of punishment.

It was Lydon's look rather than any immediately apparent musical talent that got him into the Sex Pistols. Of all the dead-end youths hanging around Malcolm McLaren and Vivienne Westwood's King's Road boutique Sex in 1975, Lydon was the one who drew McLaren's eye. (Supposedly it was Lydon's self-modified "I hate Pink Floyd" T-shirt that did it.) In three short years, the student outgrew the svengali, leaving the Rotten name and the pantomime aspect of punk behind. The name of Lydon's next band spoke volumes about his understanding of the pop business: Public Image Limited.

If nothing that he's done since has quite matched the seismic effect of "God Save The Queen" or "Anarchy In The UK", that's because nothing ever could. You can only destroy the world once. But Lydon still stands for the best of what punk meant. Not the gobbing or the bondage trousers or the safety pins (all of which he'd quickly abandoned), but the idea that the most revolutionary thing you can do is to create yourself — and then be yourself.





It was the hottest Tour de France in Years. For 21 days last July, the world's leading cyclists fried beneath a scorching sun, particularly when they cut across the south, between the Pyrenees and the Alps. But no one felt the heat like Chris Froome.

Froome grew up in Africa, so it wasn't the temperature that bothered him. It was the rumours and innuendo, the scepticism and suspicion that stalked him on his 2,000-mile trip from Holland then around France. He was jeered and spat at. During the 14th stage, a spectator yelled "Dopé!", leaned into the road and emptied a cup over his head. The liquid splashed over Froome's face and he could tell — or smell — that it was urine.

Following the stage, Froome, in the leader's yellow jersey that he would wear all the way to the finish in Paris, blamed "irresponsible reporting" for convincing a significant and vocal number of roadside fans that he was the heir to the disgraced Lance Armstrong: a cheat and a doper. The French media were particularly sceptical - "Le Péril Jaune" (The Yellow Peril) said the headline in Libération. "Questions surround the phenomenal performances of Christopher Froome," said Le Figaro. On French TV, the former rider Laurent Jalabert said Froome was "on another planet", interpreted by most as a deliberate echo of a 1999 headline in L'Equipe about the bogeyman, Armstrong.

In France's newspaper of record, *Le Monde*, a man who has come to be Froome's nemesis, the coach-turned-journalist Antoine Vayer, went even further: "Chris Froome will not win a third Tour de France if his equipment is checked at the right time and in the right place. It also remains for us to study his 'exceptional' and 'special' capabilities in laboratory conditions, which has never been done."

Vayer has been voicing his suspicion since Froome won his first Tour in 2013, but now he was suggesting something more sinister than performance-enhancing drugs — that Froome wasn't cheating by putting something in his body, but in his bike: a motor.

More challenging than anything Froome had to deal with on the road was this more insidious and opaque opponent: suspicion. There can be no more vivid an illustration of how contaminated the event has become than the fact that merely winning can elicit suspicion, distrust and a refusal to believe. In part it is the legacy of Armstrong who

was stripped in 2012 of his seven "victories", but still, as the sport's self-proclaimed Voldemort, casting a long, dark shadow.

"What more can I do, as a clean athlete?" asked Froome towards the end of the Tour. Some responded that he could release data about his performances and physiology. The debate focused in particular on Froome's ability in his favourite terrain, the mountains, where various sports scientists and armchair experts were able to calculate his power output — to varying degrees of accuracy — and decide whether they believed it was plausible or not.

Vayer was one of these experts, though whether he is a scientist or an armchair expert is also subject to debate. He was a trainer for Festina in the Nineties, the team at the centre of a huge doping scandal in 1998. Vayer wasn't involved in doping the team, but he was able to measure the effects of doping. This, he suggests, gives him a unique insight. He admits to Esquire that he has no qualifications in the scientific field; he is a physical education teacher, schooling 12-to-16-year-olds in his native Brittany. "I am not a scientist, but I know about Chris because I am inside the peloton," he says. "I have worked with enough riders to know the [natural] limits."

Based on his estimates of Froome's power data, Vayer has declared Froome's performances on selected climbs (Ax 3-Domaines in 2013, La Pierre-St-Martin in 2015) either superhuman or "mutant". He categorises performances as falling in a "zone humaine" or "zone suspecte". He says that some of Froome's rides fall into the second category.

Vayer has also called for Froome to release his VO2 max — his maximum oxygen uptake — since this is the best measure of an endurance athlete's physical capacity. In response, Froome has said that he doesn't know his VO2 stats, since he has not been tested in a laboratory. In fact, he has, but more on this later.

The problem many have with Froome dates back to September 2011, when he upstaged his Team Sky leader, Bradley Wiggins, by finishing second in one of the three Grand Tours, the Vuelta a España.

It was a performance that beggared belief: a bewildering metamorphosis by a 26-yearold rider in his fourth year as a professional. Froome had been on the verge of losing his contract, but the 2011 Vuelta simultaneously launched him as a star as well as a thousand conspiracy theories about how it had been achieved. He explained that he had suffered from bilharzia, a parasitic disease common in Africa, which medication had finally got under control. Since then he has won the Tour de France twice, but the relatively late transformation remains an impossible leap of faith for non-believers. The euphemisms are numerous: he is "superhuman", "mutant", "extraordinary".

Fans of the sport, so bruised and battered by sordid revelations concerning not just Armstrong but decades of institutionalised doping, have a hard time accepting the extraordinary.



A FEW WEEKS AFTER HIS TORRID JULY, Britain's only double Tour de France winner enters a dark glass building on the edge of a business park, alongside the Grand Union Canal in Brentford, west London. Nobody recognises the gaunt figure in a grey hooded top, black tracksuit bottoms and grey trainers on his six-minute walk from the Novotel. Worrying he'll be late for his 9am appointment, he has gone ahead, leaving his heavily pregnant wife to follow in a taxi. When the cab arrives, Michelle Froome emerges hauling a large, battered black box, inside which is her husband's bike.

It was in the final week of the Tour that Michelle — also Froome's manager — emailed the GlaxoSmithKline Human Performance Lab asking if they'd be willing to do some tests. The sports science facility, funded by the pharmaceutical giant, opened two years ago and is regularly visited by Jenson Button, Rory McIlroy, the England rugby team, the Brownlee triathlon brothers, round-the-world rowers and polar explorers.

As well as the lab's own team of sports scientists — all in GSK-branded black polo shirts, black trousers and shoes — an external expert is present: Jeroen Swart, sipping a paper cup of coffee having just arrived on the red-eye from Cape Town. Swart is a world-renowned sports physician and exercise physiologist at the University of Cape Town. He also sits on South Africa's doping control review commission.

When Froome arrives, he doesn't carry himself like a superstar athlete. He is >>

During the 14th stage of the Tour, a spectator yelled, "Dopé!", leaned into the road and emptied a cup over his head. The liquid splashed over Froome's face and he could tell—or smell—that it was urine



[01]



[02]

- Chris Froome at the 2006 UCI World U23 Championships.
  He collided with a race official on the first corner of the time trial
- 2. In the 2010 season, Froome joined Team Sky and is seen here riding in that year's Giro d'Italia
- **3.** Looking noticeably chunkier than he is now, at the 2008 UCI World Championships
- **4.** Displaying his bronze medal at the 2012 Olympics, alongside multiple gold-medallist and Sky teammate Bradley Wiggins
- **5.** Spectators at the 2014 Tour de France make their suspicions known to the competing riders
- **6.** Taking the plaudits after winning the 100th Tour De France in 2013, beating his nearest rival by four minutes 20 seconds



31



[05]

unassuming and has no entourage — surprising for a man whose £2m salary could be enhanced significantly by the bonuses and endorsements that will come with his second Tour victory. Taking the box from Michelle, he opens it, rummages for his tools and assembles the bike, attaching pedals and wheels. He then hides the box, conscious that there is a photographer and that it has non-sponsor-approved stickers. He is polite and courteous as he is given a tour of the impressive facilities, from the freezers containing human samples (muscle tissue, urine, faeces) to the cognition lab, where he volunteers to undergo some brain tests later.

First, since Froome has fasted overnight, he has some scans to determine his body composition: how much is muscle and how much is fat. The results are surprising. He looks emaciated (though he has put on almost 3kg in the three weeks since the Tour ended, going from 67 to 69.9kg) but while 61.5kg of his body is lean mass, 6.7kg is pure fat: 9.8 per cent. Since athletes have been known to have as little as four or five per cent body fat, it seems high.

Froome says he isn't surprised, that his gangly arms and legs give him the appearance of being skinnier than he is. He also says that it was much higher in 2007 when he had just arrived in Europe from South Africa as a 22-year-old. He was a trainee at the UCI World Cycling Centre, based at the governing body's headquarters in Switzerland, and he recalls being tested in a Lausanne laboratory. But he can't remember the results and has no idea where the report is, despite it being potentially key to his story. If Froome always had the physiology of a Tour winner, the clues should be in that report. Michelle says she has been trying to track down the scientist who carried out the 2007 tests.

Having done the body scans, Froome tucks into some fruit and sandwiches and strips for action, revealing a big, bloody wound on his knee. He smiles wryly. "I was taking my racing bike and my time-trial bike to wash them in the car wash." It was around the corner from his apartment in Monaco; he was riding one bike and wheeling the other alongside when the handlebars became entangled. "Down I went, quite heavily."

Since the Tour he has been riding in lucrative exhibition races all over Europe (including one the previous evening in Holland) and training hard for the forthcoming Vuelta. He mentions more than once that he feels tired — perhaps a sign of nerves ahead of the Vuelta, or anxiety about today's proceedings. "Yeah, I am a little bit nervous," he says of the tests. Which isn't surprising, since he knows he'll be judged by how he performs in this lab today. "At the end of the day, whatever the number is, I'm not going to be able to change it," he says. "But hopefully, it's going to satisfy some of the questions that have been asked."

Did the suspicion take anything away from his Tour win? "No, it didn't," he says. "Nothing is going to taint that for me. All that stuff, it was an added challenge and it did make it even harder, but in a way it feels like an even greater achievement."

But people — lots of them — have been calling him a cheat and a liar. Assuming he is not, it would only be natural to be hurt and angry. Froome, whose even temper and preternatural calm must be useful in the heat of battle, replies, "Certainly, yeah, it's hard not to get angry. You think, hold on, what people are actually accusing me of is so severe - it's basically calling me a complete fraud. All the hard work, all the training, goes out of the window when someone says you're doping. It does bother me. But at the same time I can understand where the questions are coming from. Questions do need to be asked. As long as the questions are fair, I'm happy to answer them. What gets my back up is when those questions turn into straightforward accusations.

"I know what I've done to get here. I'm the only one who can really say 100 per cent that I'm clean. I haven't broken the rules. I haven't cheated. I haven't taken any secret substance that isn't known of yet. I know my results will stand the test of time, that 10, 15 years down the line people won't say, 'Ah, so that was his secret.' There isn't a secret."

How about Vayer's suggestion that he might have a motor concealed in his bike? Froome, eating a sandwich, splutters. "That's nuts. Can you imagine?" Yet there has been speculation that so-called 'motorised doping' is a real possibility. Bike checks are now routine. "They tested my bike three or four times during the Tour," Froome says. "I find it very hard to believe that anyone has done it, but there are rumours and the technology does exist so I'm sure people are going to be asking questions. Fair enough, I think they should be checking the bikes."

When Froome is ready, Phillip Bell and Matt Furber, senior sports scientists at GSK, and Ken van Someren, the lab's director of research and development, explain the three tests he'll undergo. Two submaximal efforts, in cool then hot conditions, will measure his sustainable power. In between, a max test — "the fun one," says Bell — will determine his VO2 max: his body's rate of oxygen uptake.

This is the score that Froome knows will make the headlines. But what does it actually mean? Bell explains: "For the general population, VO2 max is somewhere around 35 to 40. For the general gym-goer, it can be in the high 40s. An active team sports player, 50s. Once you hit high 50s to 60s, that's when you're getting to the more highly trained individual. You'd expect Tour de France cyclists to be in the high 70s and above."

It is determined by genetics and by training (up to a point: if your VO2 is 40, you will not increase it to 80). Losing weight will increase VO2, since body weight is part of the calculation. It can be boosted by doping, especially blood doping (EPO hormones or blood transfusions increase the red blood cell count; red blood cells transport oxygen). But another important consideration is that VO2 is not the sole determinant of performance, otherwise the Tour could be decided in a laboratory rather than with a 2,000-mile road race. Some athletes perform poorly in a lab compared to a race situation; some athletes can operate at up to 90 per cent of their VO2 capacity for an hour, most cannot. The submaximal tests, meanwhile, will give an idea of Froome's ability to sustain power.



SEVERAL WEEKS BEFOREHAND, Froome had been threading his way through a narrow corridor of thousands of people — most cheering, some booing, one or two spitting — up Alpe d'Huez on the penultimate day of the Tour. The tiny Colombian climber Nairo Quintana had attacked him and was riding away. Froome was at his limit, clinging on to his overall lead and his yellow jersey. In the end he held it by just one minute 12 seconds.

The lab is an artificial and sterile environment in which his bike is fixed to a static trainer and a mask is attached to his face, but the effort required is the same. "It's >

"Questions do need to be asked. As long as the questions are fair, I'm happy to answer them. What gets my back up is when those questions turn into straightforward accusations"



[01





[03]





[05]

- **1.** Froome reporting for a drug test during the 2013 Tour De France
- **2.** A spectator lunges and spits at Froome on this year's Tour
- **3.** Lance Armstrong offers his opinion on Froome and teammates via Twitter
- 4 and 5. Froome is put through his paces in the GlaxoSmithKline laboratory, as scientists monitor his power and endurance levels in order to compare them to his competition performance levels

true," Froome says, "that in the lab you don't have that mental stimulus of a Colombian attacking you right when you're on your limits." Nor does he have to measure or calculate his effort — he is riding to exhaustion, not in the knowledge that the road continues to climb.

The VO<sub>2</sub> test is a killer: the whole point is to ride until you can ride no more. The early part is benign, the watts going up incrementally and barely discernibly. After seven minutes the strain starts to show. As the resistance increases every 30 seconds - it's like riding on a ramp that is gradually getting steeper and steeper — Froome begins to shift in the saddle. Veins bulge in his forehead. Ten minutes, 11, 12... It's a test that has been compared to thumb screws: at what point can you take no more? And which concedes defeat first - body or mind? In a race situation, going toe-to-toe with a rival on a climb, Froome is in no doubt that it is the mind that is in control. "It's about the body only up to a certain point. There comes a point when you're both so far into the red and so far over your limit that it turns mental; it's a mental game," he says. "It's like you both have your hands in the fire and the first to pull out loses."

In the lab, his only opponent is himself and a computer screen that he can't see. As he goes deeper into the red in the lab, his arms bend, he grimaces, his nose drops towards the handlebars, he shifts around with greater urgency, searching for a comfortable position — unlike on the road, he can't get out of the saddle — while sweat pours onto his bike. The number on the screen, indicating VO2, reads 80, 81, 82. It climbs to 90, 91, but the score is taken not on a single reading but on his average for a period of a 30 seconds.

Now, in the final throes, the lab staff begin to encourage Froome, yelling him on as his elbows bend and his head sinks and he cracks. Abruptly the force goes out of the pedals like air from a popped balloon. "Off the charts," says Bell. "We've never had anything close to that in the lab."

When the numbers are crunched Froome's Vo2 is 84.6. At his Tour de France weight, it would correlate to 88.2. A few athletes have been measured in the 90s (the highest recorded by a cyclist is believed to be by the three-time Tour winner Greg LeMond, with 92.5) but, says Bell, "Froome's

values are close to what we believe are the upper limits for VO2 peak in humans."

The submaximal tests — where Froome rides for 40 minutes on the trainer with blood samples taken at regular intervals to measure the lactate concentration, which indicates his state of fatigue — take less out of Froome but require further analysis.



In Cape Town a few weeks later, I catch up with Swart. "These tests give us an idea of what intensity Chris would be able to sustain for 20-40 minutes," Swart says, "which is roughly the length of a Tour climb."

This is critical because observers such as Ross Tucker, a South African sports scientist, have claimed that sustained power over 90 per cent of Vo2 would put any rider in the suspicious category. As for the figures in watts, Vayer uses a traffic light system: sustained output of 410 watts is "green" (suspicious); 430 is "amber" (miraculous); 450 watts is "red" (mutant).

In his test in the lab, Froome's peak power is 525 watts and his sustained power, which he should be able to maintain for 20–40 minutes, is 419 watts. The figure corresponds to 5.98 watts-per-kilogram; at his Tour weight of 67kg, it would be 6.25w/kg. Using Vayer's model, that puts him firmly in the suspicious category. Swart disagrees: "I've seen a value of 5.8w/kg being spoken of as the upper limit of human performance for a 40-minute effort. But 6.2w/kg is definitely doable for Chris for 20 minutes if not longer.

"Chris's peak power is 525 watts, which corresponds to 7.51w/kg: a massive figure," Swart continues. "But the interesting thing is that the [sustained] figure of 6w/kg — which is basically what he produced in the lab — is 79.8 per cent of his peak power. That's a completely reasonable percentage."

One problem that Vayer and others have is the lack of published and verified data relating to the top riders. Vayer says he works with elite cyclists but won't say who. He isn't impressed when I tell him that Froome has finally been to a lab to be tested. "What was the lab, what was the protocol? I would have preferred he came to my lab."

On Twitter, Michelle had released a short clip from the end of Froome's max test, with the scientists' yells of encouragement audible. "I have seen the video," says Vayer. "Yes, the cheers, this is not how we do a VO2 test. But it's like everything with Froome... a *mise en scène* [a stage-managed show]."

What would convince Vayer that Froome was clean? He once said that if Froome had a VO2 max of 90 then he might give him the benefit of the doubt, but not any more. "Nothing would convince me," he says. "He should have called me a year ago and said, 'Vayer, you make me angry, let's sit together.' If you are clean and you have doubters, you phone your doubters, don't you think? Because I am quite influential."



Soon AFTER, I return to London and meet Froome again. He didn't finish the Vuelta, crashing early on a stage in Andorra billed as the "toughest in Grand Tour history". Froome finished the stage but couldn't walk afterwards. He'd fractured his foot. Even more painful, he says, was watching the rest of the race on television. He is relieved today that a specialist has given him the all-clear to return to training.

He now knows the results from his recent lab tests. "It's interesting and I'd like to do more," he says. "One of the reasons was to understand more about my physiology and maybe find ways to be better. I'd like to do the VO2 test again, because I was definitely quite tired. I can do better."

He has other interesting news: Michelle has finally managed to track down the report from the tests carried out on Froome in Lausanne on 25 July, 2007. It's the missing link in the Froome story. Is he an athlete who underwent a dramatic — and suspicious — transformation, or were there clues in 2007 that he could become a champion?

The latter, says Swart. What is striking is how similar the two reports, eight years apart, are. Apart from one thing. Froome was 75.6kg: more than 8kg heavier than his current race weight. His body fat was 16.9 per cent. "Frankly, for an elite cyclist that's chubby," says Swart. "But he produced better figures: peak power of 540 [15 watts higher than in August 2015], threshold of 420 — we made it 419, so it's one watt less." His Vo2 max in 2007 was 80.2.

"The engine was there all along," says Swart. "He just lost the fat."

## The report is the missing link in the Froome story. Did he undergo a dramatic — and suspicious — transformation, or were there clues in 2007 that he could become a champion?



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Chef de service L.P.-F. Leyvraz

Chels de cirique Dr Ph. Zamatlan

N. réf. : HO/BG/eg

Lausanne, le 25.07.2007

Concerne : M. Christopher FROOME - né le 20.05.1985

Monsieur et cher Confrère,

En annexe, vous recevez les résultats des examens cliniques et de condition physique réalisés auprès de M. Christopher Froome, jeune athlète du centre.

Anthropométrie :

Taille: 186 cm Poids : 75,6 kg

e grasse : 12,8 kg soit 16,9 % de la masse corporelle totale.

BMI : 21

Examen clinique :

Pouls au repos : 32/min.

TA: 114/50

Auscultation cardiaque montre un souffie protosystolique 1/6 non majoré au

Auscultation pulmonaire : sp Abdomen : souple et indolore, pas d'organomégalie

Status neurologique : sp.

Examen musculo-squelettique :

Cet examen est sans particularité, pas de lésion appréciable, pas de déséquilibre

Examens de laboratoire :

Les examens sont dans la norme, notamment la ferritine est à 82.

Examen de la condition physique :

Charge maximale: 540 watts soit 7,14 watts/kg

Fréquence cardiaque maximale : 161 VO2 MAX : 80,2

Seuil ventilatoire: 420 watts soit 5,56 watts/kg

**Nothing new:** Highlighted at the bottom of the document is the VO2 max figure, which suggests Froome's capacity for endurance racing and potential to become a Tour champion existed long before he was accused of doping to win cycling races

This document of Froome's

Switzerland goes some way to explaining the subsequent

Carrying baggage: The figures highlighted show that Froome's Body Mass

Index (BMI) was abnormally high for an elite cyclist, backing up his claims that

sibly a parasitic dise since brought under control – hindered his progress

this extra weight – and

dramatic improvement in

his race performances

2007 clinical tests in

#### Nothing to hide — Froome's blood tests uncovered

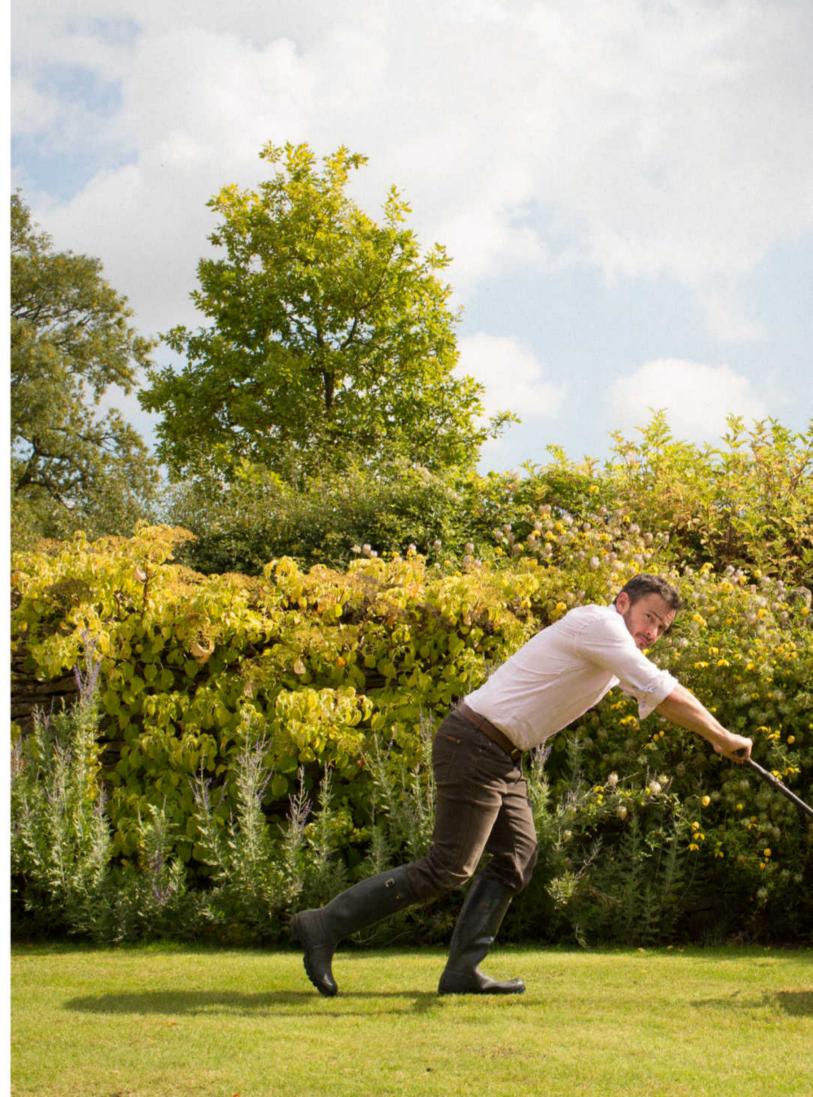
Chris Froome has agreed to let Esquire publish the results of blood tests taken the morning after his test in the GSK Human Performance Lab, and also from the day before a victory that aroused suspicion at the 2015 Tour de France, at La Pierre Saint-Martin on 14 July. We are also publishing his 2007 test results (above).

The tests on 13 July and 20 August were both unannounced tests, taken for the Athlete Biological Passport (ABP), which enables anti-doping authorities to compile a long-term profile of the athlete. Blood samples are not examined for drugs, but to spot the effects of drugs that stimulate red blood cell formation or for evidence of blood manipulation, such as withdrawal or transfusion. Scientists look at the percentage of immature red blood cells

(reticulocytes), the haemoglobin concentration and the OFF-score, which indicates the balance between the haemoglobin concentration and the percentage of reticulocytes (a measure of the rate of red blood cell formation). Normal levels for each individual are established by the ABP software as more samples are gradually added to the athlete's profile over time.

On 13 July, Froome's haemoglobin was 15.3 grams per litre (g/l) and 0.72 per cent of his red blood cells were immature (the normal adult range is 0.5-2.5 per cent). EPO stimulates the bone marrow, flooding the blood with immature cells, whereas a blood transfusion results in an excess of red blood cells, which suppresses the bone marrow and results in fewer immature red cells. His OFF-score, which approximates to the balance between the amount of red cells in his circulation and the rate of their formation, was 102.1. On 20 August, Froome's haemoglobin was 15.3 and he had 0.96 per cent immature red blood cells. His OFF-score was 94.21.

The Athlete Biological Passport wasn't introduced until 2009, so his 2007 sample can't be directly compared to his ABP values from 2015. This is because strict criteria for the sample collection, storage and subsequent processing are required for ABP bloods, resulting in far more accurate and reliable values than existed previously. This situation didn't apply in 2007 and, furthermore, there's no reticulocyte measurement or OFF-score available for this sample. However, bearing those limitations in mind, Froome's haemoglobin was 14.5 on this occasion.



Diary of a Country Coren, Part Two

# In which our man learns the ruinous cost of rural living, worries about his trousers and considers the majesty of hares

It's been a year now since Giles Coren moved, part-time, to the countryside. This is what he has learned...



#### It's f\*\*king expensive

We completed the purchase of The Cattle Barn on Halloween 2014, which was spooky, considering the mortal horror I felt at now owing the Halifax building society (crooks little finger to lower lip in the manner of Dr Evil out of Austin Powers)... one miiiiilllion pounds. Furthermore, at that sum, and at an affordable interest rate, the only kind of mortgage I could get was a capital repayment one (fucking bastard post-crisis banking laws designed to protect over-reaching losers), which meant a monthly direct debit of £4,500. On top of the £2,000 a month on my London house. After tax. Now, I don't know how much you think a freelance journalist and occasional presenter of factual entertainment formats on BBC2 gets paid. But it isn't enough for that. Or, at least, it isn't enough to have anything left afterwards for luxuries like food for your children.

But, fuck it, if rickets is good enough for the orphan toddlers of floodplain Bangladesh then it's good enough for my pampered little private school poodles. And if Kitty and Sam get hungry, they can always eat each other.

The thing is, it doesn't stop there. Normally, when you buy a house, it is because you have sold a house and so, on completion day, you just move all your shit out of the old place and into the new place. But if you're not leaving the old place then you have no shit to move into the new place. And by "shit" I mean beds, tables, chairs, televisions, computers, fridges, lamps, rugs, cushions, frying pans, spoons...

This shit is all available in shops, but at a price. And that price seems to be something like £50,000. Now, over five years of home building, that's OK. But in a week, from a starting balance of minus one million pounds, it's fucking terrifying.

We weren't going to do a load of basement digging, mini-cinema, pool and gymtype Arab stuff to the place. It was basically fine. But you've got to repaint, haven't you? Just bog-standard Dulux off-white, but two coats and a lot of walls: five grand.

And there's 4,000sq ft of carpets full of other people's jizz, sweat, skin cells, turd flecks etc, which you've really got to replace. Just biscuit-coloured plain stuff from Carpetright: five grand.

You need a climbing frame, sandpit and trampoline in order for the kids to have something to do: a grand.

You need a telly: a grand.

You need a king-size bed and one for guests and four children's beds. And you're 46 years old so you're not going to fucking Ikea: three grand.

You need guys in to connect up 'leccy, phone, satellite TV, broadband, Wi-Fi, burglar alarm, electric gates, fill the oil tank, service the Aga, boiler and heating: four grand.

There's council tax in the top bracket: three grand.

There's council tax for the dingy hovel bedroom over the garage, which, for some reason, is registered as a "cottage" and has its own rating: a grand.

You need pictures for the acres of wall space painted really cheap and ugly.



## A man says, 'Coren, isn't it? I remember your father from The News Quiz. Never liked him. You a shooting man?' 'Not really,' you say, honestly. 'Although I'm keen to start...'"

Nothing nice. Just a load of hunting prints and crappy pressed flowers from local junk shops: five grand.

Rugs to cover the horrible carpet you've laid: five grand.

The gardener says you need a tractor "for topping the upper field", whatever the arse that means. So, you look into it and even secondhand tractors are like, 20 grand, so you go, "bollocks to that," and buy a Japanese ride-on mower instead: five grand.

And the gardener is happy with it, but says you'll still need a tractor eventually. But you just hope you'll be dead by then.

You bring the old wooden kitchen table up from London to save money but then have to replace the one in London with — says your wife — a fashionable, zinc-topped mid-century refectory bench: three grand.

You need chairs: a grand.

You get a pair of old sofas off your mum but have to take her and her boyfriend out for dinner to say thank you: three hundred.

You need pots, pans, plates, bowls, cups, cutlery, bed linen, towels — you're going shopping every damn fucking day with a list that says, "doormats, bucket, Hoover, string, toast rack, scales, trowel, fire guard, soap...": just fucking thousands.

And then you're poking about in the garage — or "cottage", as Gloucestershire County Council would have it — and your wife says, "We were going to get a 4x4, weren't we?" And you remember that she had her heart set on a rusty old Land Rover Defender with a vertical exhaust in army blue for tooling around the country lanes. That was how you sold her the idea of the house: she was going to get this sexy, old, soldier's car. So, you go down to the Land Rover garage in the village and there's a proper beaten-up, old, fucked one with 1991 plates that you can probably afford and you ask the guy and he says: "Ten grand".

And you laugh and go, "No, but seriously..."
And he says, "Seriously. Ten grand. You won't pick up a Defender for less than that.
They've stopped production. It's a heritage car. A fashion piece. They don't come any cheaper than this. And this one hasn't got an engine. It's 15 for one that actually goes."

And 15 grand you really do not have. So, home you go. On the way, you stop for a loaf of bread at the baker in Stow-on-the-Wold.

"One pound twenty," says the lady. "Unless you're local."

"I am," you say. "I'm just the other side of Lower Swell."

"Oh well, in that case you get local discount," she says. "One pound eight."

And at last you have saved money. At this rate, in 14m years you'll be even.

#### Children adjust more slowly to the joys

It's our first night at The Cattle Barn. There's a storm blowing outside, rain falls hard on the roof, there is the crack of trees falling in the woods, a boom as lightning strikes not all that far away, and the occasional screech of terrified horses.

"This is what it's all about," I say to Esther. "Serious proximity to nature. Actual exposure to the elements. You don't feel the weather like this in London. This is properly Stone Age."

There is another thunderclap and my four-year-old daughter, Kitty, comes pelting down the corridor from her room, springs on the suitcase at the foot of the bed like a gymnast on the pommel horse and lands smack between us.

"I'm scared!" she says, and dives under the covers

"Don't worry, darling," I say. "It's just, um, God being in a bad mood and smashing the place up a bit."

"I don't want to be smashed up by God!" she says and bursts into tears.

"Nice one," says Esther.

#### Hares are amazing

They're not like rabbits. Rabbits are shit. They were brought in by the Romans or the Normans or something, and just sit there nibbling on their own turds and looking at you, and then potter off when you move in for a close look. But hares. Jesus. You're walking across a bare stubble field on a bright autumn evening, minding your own

business, admiring the vast skies and a lazy buzzard heading home to its family with that extraordinary speed and straightness of trajectory that marks it out among prey birds... Oh, it's an Amazon delivery drone... when suddenly, FLASH! A young hare, as big as a deer, leaps up from the bed it has made for itself in a dip in the field, its huge ears, its kangaroo-like legs, that shape silhouetted on horizons across this land since long before the first humans, and then ZOOOOM! It's off: o-60mph in zero seconds in a flat sprint, not bobbing and weaving and hopping like a stupid rabbit, but straight, like a bullet from a gun, like a... like a hare, in fact, on the electric circuit at the dog races. It does three sides of a ten-acre field in what seems like seconds. Swift and contemptuous as Usain Bolt. Awesome. Just awesome.

#### The right outerwear is important

Everyone in the country wears a flat cap and a wax jacket. That's just the rules. With trousers there's a bit of leeway, except nobody wears jeans, because they are difficult to walk in when wet (apparently). And then there is a certain sort of stout hiking shoe that I just wouldn't know where to start looking for (Lesbians R Us?).

Wellington boots seem to be OK but only if it's really, really muddy. It's no good putting them on to go shopping just because it looks like rain — people will literally shout, "poofter!" You may wear wellies only to traverse areas of such deep, slippery mud and mammal shit that the Defender you can't afford couldn't even go there. And they mustn't be cheap and plastic-y. But then, they mustn't be Hunters because that's what chavs wear to Glastonbury.

Luckily, what I have is Hunters where the brand name has been inked out with a Sharpie because they were costume for a BBC2 show I did and the compliance department didn't want the brand name to be visible in a close-up of my feet. So they're OK. They're not even slightly media-wanker-down-for-the-weekend.

I do have a wax jacket, a Barbour that was given to me by Barbour when I did



#### "They ask where in the countryside you were brought up, and you think you'd better lie, but you don't want to say a real county in case they know it and catch you out. So you say, 'Borsetshire!""

a different TV show and they sort of hoped I would wear it on camera, but I didn't in the end because the soundman said it made a funny noise on the radio-mic. Initially, I left it in London because I didn't want people in the country to think I was taking the piss. But then I got soaking wet whenever I went for a walk because I didn't dare wear my pale blue anorak, either, in case people thought I was an elderly tourist on a walking holiday. So now I have it down here and will put it on when I pluck up the courage.

#### Indoor clothes are important, too

As with the business of not having any furniture when one moves into a second home, one also doesn't have any clothes. You can't go schlepping a suitcase backwards and forwards from London every weekend because that would defy the point of having a "second home". If you're going to do that, then you might as well go on holiday to a hotel every weekend. Which would actually be much cheaper. And nicer. But you don't want to think about that, so you divide your wardrobe in two.

And when I say "divide in two", I mean you dig out all the clothes that you have kept for sentimental reasons but never wear in London because they: (a) Are madly out of fashion; (b) Don't fit; (c) Were ugly in the first place; (d) Make you look fat; (e) Have moth holes in them; (f) Were free from when you worked at Ralph Lauren in the early Nineties and were a bad enough pastiche of English clothing then, but now look truly ridiculous.

And you put them all in cardboard boxes and send them to Gloucestershire, along with a dozen pairs of your not-best pants — all threadbare and browned in the gusset, with elastic showing at the frayed waistline — and you lay them all out in your new walk-in wardrobe (which the estate agent's prospectus had down as "Bedroom Four") and stand back and consider the job a mighty fine one.

And then you get invited to a Christmas party by the big local landowner and you go to your walk-in wardrobe and concoct a pretty damned excellent outfit for such an

occasion: baggy yellow flannels, a pair of oxblood brogues from a charity shop, an old mauve school shirt, a novelty golfing tie, the waistcoat of a three-piece suit in Prince of Wales check from which you've lost the coat and trousers, and your father's old chocolate brown elephant cord jacket, labelled "Dandie of The King's Road, 1967".

And you go downstairs and there is your wife, wearing a black dress and boots and carrying a Marc Jacobs clutch, and chortling quietly to herself. And you think, "I don't know why you're chortling, you look completely wrong for the country."

It's raining, but you don't take your Barbour because, you say to your wife, you do not want to overdo the country look. And she nods her agreement while apparently unable to speak due to having to suppress something, possibly vomit.

At the party there are a lot of men who, despite being country people, seem to be wearing plain shirts and slacks. There is a roaring fire, it is hot. In your multi-layered squire's kit you set to *schvitzing* like a rapist. You swallow lots of cold Champagne very fast, to cool yourself.

The room swims a little. You hear people muttering names like "Rupert" and "Toad" and think how quaint it is here. People ask if you're permanent or just a weekender and you realise the correct answer is "permanent", so that's what you say. Then they ask where in the countryside you were brought up, and you think you'd better lie but don't want to say a real county in case they know it and catch you out, so you make one up. You say, "Borsetshire!" And then remember that's a made-up place from *The Archers*.

So, you swivel round and a man says, "Coren, isn't it? I remember your father from *The News Quiz*. Never liked him. You a shooting man?"

"Not really," you say, honestly. But not wanting to offend, you add, "Although I'm keen to start..." But he's lost interest now, so when the next old boy says, "You a shooting man?", you reply, "Fuck, yes. Shoot everything to shit. Pheasants, ducks, pigs, cows, those ones that look a bit like horses with antlers on their heads..."

And then your wife is leading you to the car and on the way back you say, "I think that all went rather well, considering..." But your wife is just fucking laughing like a mad, crazy bitch now, and when you get home you finally shout, "Whaaaaaat? What the fuck is it? What is so fucking funny?"

"Oh, I'm sorry, darling," she says. "I don't mean to laugh, but look at yourself."

And you turn and look in the hall mirror—£490 from a junk shop, when it would have been £40 from Ikea and actually have a visible reflection— and in the dim light (must get some wall lamps put in), you see yourself: the brogues, the yellow bags, the Prince of Wales "weskit", the tie, the big jacket, the weird parting you hadn't even remembered putting in your hair...

"You look like Toad of Toad Hall!"
"Eh?"

"I mean, what on Earth possessed you? You look like... no, not Toad of Toad Hall, like Rupert Bear. Like Rupert of Toad Hall. Like..." And she collapsed again into laughter.

"Really? But this is the countryside. Ithought that..."

"It's the countryside, darling, but it's not Mars. People actually live here. They don't think of it as requiring fancy dress. Did you see? They were just wearing normal, modern clothes. Their eyes were on stalks when you walked in."

"Why didn't you say something?"

"Well, I was going to. But you came down looking so pleased with yourself I just didn't have the heart."

"I see," you say. "Well, I hope you die in your sleep tonight."

But she was so sick with laughing, it was all that she could do to squeeze out a "Poop! Poop!"

And you go to your bed. And do not leave it until well into the New Year.

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Next time: Giles has an overdose of chard, grows to hate horses even more, discovers that in the countryside gypsies are an actual thing and tries to keep a nature diary, but can't really be arsed.



#### "Do I still feel physically strong? Yes. You want me to knock your teeth out to prove it?"

I'M NOT A GOOD DANCER but my wife thinks I am sometimes. I went to a dance class when I began acting. I laughed so hard I could hardly stand up because I felt like such an idiot.

ONCE YOU'VE WEATHERED THE STORM YOU can do it again. That doesn't mean it doesn't come with fear and doubt and all the phenomenal emotions we have, but you must maintain that effort. You have to be prepared to suffer.

I GREW UP IN BROOKLYN, NEW YORK. I had a little pigeon coop when I was young and I'd steal pigeons from other people's coops. My father made hats. My mother worked in a luncheonette. I got myself thrown out of high school at 16 and they were upset about that.

TRUE FRIENDSHIP, where you can rely on the person and they can rely on you, is a powerful force. I place the highest value on that.

THE DISCIPLINE OF THERAPY helped me to get along with myself. That was a long time ago. As Rihanna sings so beautifully, I get along with the voices inside of my head.

Do I STILL FEEL PHYSICALLY STRONG? Yes. You want me to knock your teeth out to prove it? I eat properly, I exercise and I don't abuse anything. I take care of myself.

If someone hadn't seen one of my films where should they start? I never thought of that. I can't even think about it now. I'm not being coy with you. I might say read a good book instead. Adam, Eve, and the Serpent by Elaine Pagels is a favourite of mine.

WHAT PISSES ME OFF is talking behind my back, which covers a lot of ground.

THERE'S ALWAYS ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT. Everywhere. I mean, not in terms of my being an honest person or a loyal person or being compassionate and tolerant. There's no place I need to go there; that has not changed in years and it will not change. I could be more patient.

WHEN I WAS A LITTLE BOY, I had a stutter. I still stutter, but much less. Back then it was a real champion stutter. In time it faded away, for the most part. Now it seems to be returning a little bit. Maybe because I'm so fatigued. I don't mean just now, but in these years.

GETTING OLD IS A PLEASURE. You're not dead. What do I think happens after we die? No problem. If you understand that answer then you explain it to me.

FATHERHOOD LET ME KNOW I was ready for it. I didn't know until that moment. I tell everyone they should have children. It's never too late.

WAS COCAINE EVER MY CUP OF TEA? I won't discuss that. I won't discuss it because it's not something to be asked in a question-and-answer period like we're having now. That's a serious subject and should be discussed in a serious way with serious-minded people in a serious environment. Whether it's cocaine, marijuana, alcohol or whatever other drugs are out today, it's serious. Very serious.

THE CHARACTERS THAT I PLAY have a terrible habit of following me around.

IF I SAY THAT I'M AN OPTIMIST, I might seem like a fool. If I say I'm not, then I'll seem like a cynic. Perhaps I'm both.

I JOINED THE MARINES when I turned 17. They created an identity in me. I felt like I could meet a challenge and could endure until I completed the action. It gave me a sense of helping other people and camaraderie. A sense of pride. I spent three years in the Marines. I left because I missed my mother. Really. I was homesick.

OF COURSE, IT'S RIDICULOUS to have regrets. My only regret would be if I was not aware of the regret itself. That would be a real regret.

"Movie star" is a nice term because it's poetic and fairy tale-ish but it has no truth about it.

The Human race can be ridiculous about religion. That idea that my religion has the connection to God and your religion does not seems absurd. I remember feeling that way growing up, that my religion was special and every other religion was not. Having grown up, I know what I know and I pursue a path of wanting to be aware, wanting to know what I don't know but sense is there. I can say that there is only one divine and that is the divine. I grew up Jewish. Now my religion is to do what is right.

IT COULD BE THAT I'M GLORIFYING IT because it's past, but the Seventies seemed to be a great time. Now things seem more degraded to me than they were back then. I mean, there was debauchery and degradation, if you will, back then, but there was also the spirit of Woodstock and of not finding the right girl but becoming the right person.

An actor doesn't make himself cry or laugh. An actor is never nude in a scene. Never any of those things. An actor plays a scene in the best way he knows how, in the most profound way he can summon up the meaning of that event. Whatever comes out is in the service of bringing a moment of truth to the stage.

No one else can review me as severely as I review myself.

I HAD SORT OF A DISLIKE FOR MONEY because it was such a hardship growing up. We always had bills, this or that. So, when everybody became so concerned about money while I was concerned about survival and relationships, I said, "Oh, fuck money". If a friend of mine got a new car, I had this habit of spitting on it. They would get so mad at me.

IF YOU WANT TO MAKE A GOOD first impression with women, don't bite your nails.

During Night combat training in the Marine Corps, we were out in a field. It was very dark. You could not see your hand before your face. There were a couple of hundred of us, just finished boot camp on Parris Island [South Carolina]. I was frightened. Suddenly this voice boomed: "You're all afraid of the dark." I was stunned. In the distance there was a Marine instructor standing on a platform, silhouetted by the moon. I thought to myself, "How the hell does he know I'm scared? He can't even see me!" I was embarrassed that he saw my fear. Then he said, "We're going to teach you how to live in the darkness so you're no longer afraid of it."

I DON'T THINK ABOUT RETIRING. I will be retired at the proper time. 

Youth is in cinemas on January 29

Harvey Keitel, photographed in London, October 2015





Read more in our series of What I've Learned interviews at esquire.co.uk



## Final call for Mr Self

As an adventure-seeking boy, <u>Will Self</u> longed to be an airline pilot. It didn't happen — and later his desire to fly turned to cold fear of the air. Now, inspired by a pilot's memoirs, Esquire's editor-at-large intrepidly attempts to banish his aviophobia on a BA Boeing 747 flight simulator



My FEAR OF FLYING COMES and goes, of which more later; but often, the night before a flight. I'll lie in bed overawed by the journev I'm about to undertake. My vulnerable little body, a mere boiled-up stew of sentience in a skin bag, will be squeezed into a metal tube with a lot of other human paste then blasted 30,000ft into the sky. The tube will describe a long parabola, the end of which may fall to earth in New York, or Singapore, or, on a bad day, Dusseldorf. I often observe to frequent flyers, of whom there are now millions, quite how physically extreme air travel is. If you're a man, and aren't a sadomasochist and haven't undergone major surgery, flying is probably

the most radical thing you've ever had done to your body. Lying in the semidark of an urban bedroom, I picture myself in all my naked vulnerability, arcing across the purple-black empyrean, my dangling nadgers temporarily eclipsing the minute greenish disc of the planet Venus, named for the Greek goddess of love.

And while the prospect may seem

terrifying to me now, the irony is that it was reveries such as this that infested my childhood and I expect they did yours as well: "I wish I could fly!" even rhymes with a naively heartfelt sigh. We all wished we could fly. We all wished we could break into a jog then a trot then a sprint, divesting ourselves with each footstep of another item of school uniform - tie, blazer, grey shorts, Aertex shirt - to reveal not little pink nadgers but a superhero's costume; one in which we then took to the skies, banking between chimneys, soaring over tower blocks, curvetting and looping the loop. Our dreams of flying were always unfettered by any of the realities of commercial air travel there was no checking-in to this wild blue yonder, no shuffling through security or any necessity for engineering or infrastructure we simply took to the air, often in our pyjamas. Indeed, so great is the divergence between our experience of flight and our airborne reveries, that sometimes during my night-before-flight anxieties I'll remonstrate with myself: are you absolutely sure you've ever truly been airborne? After all, with one or two exceptions, all the "flights" you've ever taken could've easily been simulated.

I was at some literary do or other a few months ago where I was introduced to Mark Vanhoenacker, a British Airways 747 pilot who's written a book, *Skyfaring: a Journey with a Pilot*, about his work, which also happens to be his abiding passion. Vanhoenacker, with his blondish, crew-cut hair, pale blue eyes and smooth complexion,

rather more resembles the management consultant he once was than the romantic aviator he's sort-of become. His book has been much-lauded, while he's been compared to the romantic flyer-cum-writer Antoine de Saint-Exupéry (who, after many adventures, disappeared at sea near Marseille while flying a reconnaissance mission with the Free French Air Force in 1944, something Vanhoenacker's passengers probably don't need to know). We chatted for a moment or two, then I forgot about the encounter. Mark didn't: he sent me a proof copy of his book, then began suggesting I come for a spin in British Airways' flight



simulator with him, so I could get as close as possible to his blissed-out state as he wrestles 450,000kg of metal, flesh, Samsonite luggage and miniature bottles of Baileys through the zephyrs wreathing our planet.

I pretty much ignored these blandishments. After all, as I implied above, what we mostly want from a scheduled flight is that it be as physically unreal as a simulation: if we come bumpily close to realising quite how up-up-and-away we truly are, it's usually because we fear things are screwing up and we're terrified of going down. Yes, yes, I'm not a complete numpty, I know turbulence isn't really a problem for commercial aircraft, and many of you will have had a similar experience to mine: flying into the great hub of St Louis, Missouri, during hurricane season and finding all the flights grounded, except for my own connection to New York, I staggered onto the plane and, finding it near-empty, concluded everyone

else knew something I didn't. Seeing my nervy state, one of the other passengers joined me and, as we were taxiing, explained he was a cockpit fascia designer on his way back from Boeing contractor Rockwell Collins' plant at Cedar Rapids. "These planes are flown on a wire," he grinned, "which means they simply won't leave unless it's completely safe." At which point I blurted out the flat-Earther's plaint: "But how does it stay in the air? I mean it's a great heavy chunk of metal and... stuff." Whereupon my buddy patiently explained that given the laws of physics it was practically impossible for the aircraft not to stay in the air.

On that occasion, despite the turbulence being suitably Midwestern the plane bucking like the proverbial bronco - I was soothed by the professional's presence. Wasn't it always thus? Indeed, given how neurotic I am, it occurs to me I never would've flown with any equanimity at all were it not for such expert reassurance. When I was a kid in the Sixties, intercontinental flying was a big deal and the only reason I did it was because my mother was American. To give you some idea of how uncommon it was, in 1964, when, aged three, I first flew to the States, annual passenger numbers at Heathrow were around 10m: in 2014, some 75m passed through the airport. Back in the day, transatlantic flights retained a little of the romantic élan once associated with the great ocean liners: there were real flowers in vases in the toilets (together with free sticks of chewing gum - bliss!), and the portholes had little curtains, complete with pelmets. But what made flying great for me was my membership

of the BOAC Junior Jet Club.

The British Overseas Air Corporation was the state-owned predecessor to British Airways. It handled long-haul routes while British European Airways (BEA) did as its name would imply. The two outfits merged in the early Seventies, but before that, BOAC had a distinct identity. My BOAC Junior Jet Club logbook was a handsome, blue-linen-covered item with pages pre-ruled for young flyers to fill out their itinerary, distance, altitude etc. There was also a space for the captain's signature so, dutifully on each flight, my mother would request we be allowed to visit the cockpit. To the infant me (known in the family, I kid you not, as "Little Willy"), the combination of smart uniforms, rugged shaven chins and shit-loads of buttons and levers was altogether irresistible. I yearned tragically to become an airline pilot. Tragically, because soon enough a different arm of government, the NHS,



tested me for colour-blindness, and the results were... well, beige. It turned out I could scarcely distinguish blue and yellow, let alone red and green. My piloting days were over before they'd begun.

I'D ASSUMED THE DAYS OF DROPPING by the cockpit were also long-gone but according to Vanhoenacker it's still quite acceptable to request a visit, and if the pilots are minded (and presumably you've been searched for box-cutters), you'll be invited up the sharp end. But I seriously doubt anyone who hasn't been vetted to beyond buggery is ever - and I mean ever - allowed any more on the bridge of a commercial airliner while it's taking off or landing. Back in the Nineties, I lucked out: I was on a press junket to Sweden and the only berth SAS had for me was a little jump-seat between the pilots. The plane was an old McDonnell Douglas DC-10 and, as we pushed back from the passenger bridge, one of the pilots informed me it was among the last airliners still in service that didn't have servo-mechanised controls. "So you can actually feel its responses through the steering column," he said.

It was only a short flight to Stockholm, yet during it I was able to experience much of what Mark Vanhoenacker rhapsodises in his book, and some things he doesn't. I mean, at least when you're a passenger, you don't bother getting stressed out about your position in the queue to takeoff, but when you can see 15 or 20 aircraft ahead of you, it's difficult to resist the conclusion you're in a traffic jam like any other. And once up in the air, this sense of the familiar persisted. My SAS pilots were both ex-Danish Air Force and, as we gained altitude out of Heathrow and western Europe spread out below us, their attention naturally swung to their own miserable, pig-infested peninsula. "Oh," said either Benny or Bengt, "Look down there!" I did as I was bade - the cockpit was so cramped I was virtually sitting in his lap. "Can you see those fighters coming up from Jutland?" I could. There were three of them ascending in tight formation. "That'll be some of Jens's squadron." Benny (or Bengt) said, "How do you put it ...? Ah yes, they're out for an evening spin." It was this sense of a continental land mass reduced to the dimensions of a village that stayed with me, that and the astonishing snowstorm we powered through to land at Arlanda Flygplats (achingly boring country—crazy name for an airport). Vanhoenacker notes of snow observed from a plane's cockpit that the individual flakes appear to be held in suspension, as if you're witnessing some sort of snowstorm diorama.

Mind you, I was still relieved to be back on the ground. As I said, my fear of flying comes and goes and it was mostly absent while Benny and Bengt were doing their thing. I mean, I am English after all, and it would be the grossest of solecisms to evince fear while someone's doing their job competently. It occurred to me then that if I could only arrange to always fly in the cockpit I'd be fine, but my opportunity to test out this hypothesis didn't come for another 15 years, when I flew 20 miles from the mainland of Shetland to Foula island, where a ridiculously isolated community resides out in the Atlantic. Arriving at the dinky airport, I was confronted by a check-in desk the size of a lectern. Out on the airstrip the plane was being made ready - it looked like an old Citroen 2CV with added wings. A man, also with added wings, came from a back office and confirmed he was the pilot by gaily saying, "Looks like you're the only passenger today. You can ride in the co-pilot's seat if you like."

Which rather begged the question: where the fuck's the co-pilot? As we taxied on to the runway, my companion warned



me, "Make sure you open your legs as we take off - that steering column will come up sharpish." I tried not to think of this as a perverse sexual come-on, but it was difficult, and I concentrated so hard on the tricky leg-opening manoeuvre I all but missed us getting airborne. Suddenly, we were bumbling along just like any other 2CV, the only difference being that the road was utterly transparent, while through it I could see an astonishing vista of islets, lochs and headlands - land in water and water in land. It was too shockingly beautiful to experience with any equanimity, I just wanted to get back on the ground so I could recollect it in tranquillity. My leg-parting pilot had a different idea: he'd established this was my first visit to Foula, which has spectacular 1,000ft-high sea cliffs, so he made me an offer: "Would you like me to buzz the cliffs?" I was in no position to refuse.

It was indisputably one of the most radical physical experiences of my life — right up there with invasive surgery — and I even forgot to be terrified as we came in to land on a grassy airstrip the island's sheep-shaggers maintain themselves. Either that, or yet

again my psyche refused to admit the landing was taking place at all, and decided it was simply a devilishly effective simulation.

preventing mass (simulated) carnage

#### TRUE, THE MAINLAND-FOULA FLIGHT

was about as vivid as anything gets but simulation remains of the essence of modern powered flight. In *Skyfaring*, Mark Vanhoenacker writes at length about the exhaustive simulator training sessions involved in training to be a pilot and the annual reboots all aircrew require so they can stay au fait with the evolving technology. Even so, airline pilots are only usually qualified to fly one kind of aircraft, and in his case it's the majestic Boeing 747 "Jumbo Jet", the great galleon of an airliner that's dominated intercontinental aviation for nigh on a half-century.

There's much to enjoy in Vanhoenacker's book, which brings a rhapsodic eye and a precise poetical gift to a daily go-round which consists of, well, going around the world. He captures beautifully how it is to work with

an ever-rotating set of workmates (BA crews seldom fly twice with the same colleagues), and to have your days off one week in Cape Town, the next Singapore. He explains carefully the different systems - navigational, communications, power and computational - involved in getting 747s from Athens to Bogota. Most of all, he delights in the strange phenomena associated with high-altitude flight: racing the dawn across the oceans, observing spectacular weather and vast, untenanted landscapes. Throughout, he combines a profound sense of wondrous exhilaration with an impression of deep and abiding competence and it's no wonder British Airways have, unprecedentedly, endorsed the book: Vanhoenacker is a perfect poster boy for their global business.

All of which goes a long way towards obscuring the ugly realities of Malaysia Airlines Flight 370, Germanwings Flight 9525 etc, etc. Indeed, it would be a gross solecism — as I think I've already said — to raise such

matters when people as competent as Vanhoenacker are doing their job. But I can't help pointing out that while it may be difficult and expensive to simulate the cockpit drills of airline pilots, simulating the cabin routines of their passengers would be a piece of the proverbial piss. Really, there's no comparison whatsoever between guiding a great hunk of metal through the heavens, and sitting in the back watching Mad Max on a fag-packetsized VDU while judiciously savouring the farts of the human cattle penned in beside you. Flying for pilots may be a near-endless stream of peak experiences, but for those of us adding to British Airways' revenues, it's usually a series of dull and forgettable ones. Moreover, I'd argue this is precisely what the airline companies want. After all, if flying were allowed to be as genuinely exciting as it is, think how difficult it would be for Mark

Vanhoenacker and his colleagues to deal with their millions of jizzed-up passengers?

My other problem with Vanhoenacker's take on the romance of commercial flying is that contemporary airliners have some of the most advanced automatic systems of any human technology. Remember the fascia designer for Boeing who told me about "flying on a wire"? It's true: not only can a modern jet fly from Athens to Bogota with nary a hand on its controls, it can also take off and land. Indeed, on those occasions an airport is shrouded in fog or otherwise obscured, they do just this. Contemporary critics of the rise of the machines, notably Nicholas Carr in his excellent The Glass

Cage: How our Computers are Changing Us, point out many pilots actually want more to do in the cockpit, while several horrific recent crashes are attributable not to pilot error per sé, but to pilot confusion when called upon in an emergency to reassume control of a plane they've lost the feel for. None of which is to suggest we can do without pilots — even if Mark and his pals are only there to second-guess computers — but it casts a shadow over their romantic lustre.

Still, what you can't take away from airline pilots is that in a world cram-packed with adipose boy-racers, couch-surfers and other impotent first-person shooters, they really do hold the lives of hundreds in their hands for those few tremulous minutes between switching off the autopilot and announcing: "Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to Heathrow where the local time is 3:25pm and the weather's shit... as usual." So, at Mark Vanhoenacker's insistence I entrained for Feltham to find out what it felt like.

I SUPPOSE I SHOULD'VE BEEN more overawed by the signal honour of taking the controls in a BA flight simulator. But a clickety-clack train journey, followed by a bicycling meander through the scrappy environs of Heathrow Airport kept me feeling very much down to earth. The Cranebank Training Facility looks like just another bypass-bound assemblage of nondescript commercial-industrial buildings — the lumber of the contemporary built environment, which the architect Rem Koolhaas has dubbed "junk space". As for the simulator itself, well, since they've become an accepted part of museums' infotainment and theme parks' thrills, these large metal shoeboxes poised on servo-mechanical hydraulic jacks hold little mystery for us. Still, it was amusing to go inside and see all the little cockpit details Mark had written about, including the long-since redun-



dant ashtrays. (Apropos of which, I must say the most romantic plane flight I ever took was the last scheduled one out of Heathrow you were allowed to smoke on. By some fluke I managed to get an upgrade; so it was I rose into the celestial blue clutching an open bottle of Champagne and puffing on a fag. Even at the time, I realised this was the end of a hedonistic era, and my life would enter a puritanical holding pattern from here on.)

I took the pilot's seat, Mark the co-pilot's and we buckled up. A reasonably believable visualisation of Heathrow Airport by night sprung into being beyond the curved cabin windows, one spoilt only by its rather pixellated definition. Mark asked me if I'd like to try landing the big 747 beast and I assented enthusiastically: at last I'd experience the thrill of holding all those lives, all that investment capital, all those potential insurance pay-outs, cradled in my hands. He took me through the controls, showing me how to alter pitch, course and the rate of descent.

Surprising to relate, 747s aren't the most responsive of craft — no direct transmission here — instead, you yank on the controls and seconds later the laggardly thing heels to one side. Quite early into our approach I realised we were going to crash. Why? Duh! Because I've never flown a 747 before, or any other aircraft. Personally, I was looking forward to crashing the plane. After all, from a thrillseeker's point of view, a crash is infinitely more exciting than a safe landing. Moreover, to crash the imaginary 747 would teach me to properly respect the skills of Mark and his colleagues as they wrestle very real airborne juggernauts down on to the tarmac.

But it was not to be. The automatic voice intoned over the intercom: "Three thousand feet, two thousand feet" and then came suitably monitory words to the effect this was

> our last chance to abort the landing. But I didn't want to abort! I wanted to go out in a fireball of frustrated dreams of flight. I wanted to definitively screw the pooch! However, it was not to be, and as we wavered in sickeningly, heading straight for a vast (simulated) passenger terminal, I felt the controls twitch and then steady in my hands as far more competent ones seized them. It was Mark. The bastard! He just couldn't help his conditioning, couldn't stop himself from preventing mass (simulated) carnage.

> Once we were on the (simulated) ground and rolling towards the (simulated) passenger bridge, I rounded on him. "Hey! We were going to crash back then, but

you ruined it. You should've let me stay fully in control." But you don't get to be a commercial pilot without being unflappable, and he just smiled and said, "Really, I just helped a bit."

Which is fair enough: we all want the men and women in the peaked caps to help us a bit. Mark Vanhoenacker's book is a beautiful piece of writing, and tells you as much about what it's like to fly a big passenger jet as you'll ever want to know. He effusively conveys what it's like to descend into London, the cockpit bathed in the heavenly light of dawn, but what Mark doesn't go near is the experience of those who live along his flight paths. What people such as me, slumbering fitfully 4,000ft below, who are roused time and again to yet another long grey morning of the soul by his tightly scheduled yet deeply romantic brand of thrill seeking. 4

Skyfaring: a Journey with a Pilot (Chatto & Windus) by Mark Vanhoenacker is out now

# WHAT BIGGEST OFY( BRITIS 2

# SILE )UNG HEN **5**?

### We are.

#### By Sam Parker

IMAGINE A VIRUS WE DON'T FULLY understand is killing young men in record numbers. It kills three times as many British men as women, although nothing adequately explains why. The government confirms that while almost all other leading causes of death are being slowly eroded by medical and social progress, deaths caused by this virus are at their highest for decades. Yet the money we spend on researching and treating the problem stands at a fraction of what we spend on those other leading causes of death, as do charitable donations from the public.

The deaths this virus has caused have risen to the point that if you are a man between 20 and 49, you're more likely to die from it than cancer, road accidents or heart disease. It is the biggest threat we face, the number one killer. The figures are chilling, and yet still it is something we hardly discuss, in public or private — which is a significant part of the problem itself.

Last February, the Office for National Statistics published a report covering the years from 2001 to 2013, showing that suicide among men has reached its highest levels since the early Eighties, rising sharply in 2007 and hitting a peak in 2013. (In the same period, suicide among women declined, then remained constant.) Always a leading cause of death among the young — for the simple reason that death by natural causes is statistically less likely — suicide rates in men aged between 45 and 59 have also now begun to rise, increasing to their highest levels since 1981.

Former Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg earlier this year described suicide as "a massive taboo", the last in mental health. The reasons for this are relatively easy to explain, if not to justify. Before the 1961 Suicide Act, taking your own life was illegal in Britain. It still carries with it a connotation of dishonour and shame, as if those who do it are deserters from the battlefield of life. "The easy way out" they used to call it, and perhaps some still do.

It is still the case that the type of men we think die by suicide are the unwell, the disturbed, the unlucky; who stumble at life's biggest hurdles and are too weak to get back up. Most of us like to think we're made of sterner stuff. We don't know that 75 per cent of people who take their own lives have never been diagnosed with a mental health problem, or that only five per cent of people who do suffer from depression go on to take their own lives.

We think of recent high-profile examples of suicide, like fashion designer Alexander McQueen, who killed himself in 2010, Wales football manager Gary Speed (2011), or film star Robin Williams (2014), as anomalies. Men who had it all: money, fame, the adoration of the public, the respect of their peers, a glorious past and assured futures. We celebrate their memories as professionals, but we don't pause to consider what their deaths tell us about mental health, about the way that no amount of external glory can ameliorate an inner pain.

But the statistics are clear. The problem has become too big for us to ignore. The question to be asked now is not just why young men are killing themselves in record numbers, but what are we going to do about it?

I AM SITTING IN THE ALMOST EMPTY CAFE of a no-frills hotel in North London. It's a functional sort of place, designed for people with brief business in the capital rather than those on holiday. A couple of students scan the day's papers. A waitress cuts fruit for the smoothie machine. A man in a suit drifts in and out of the room, talking self-importantly on his phone.

A hand lands on my shoulder. It is Shirley Smith, a small, energetic woman in her late forties with short red hair. I introduce myself and she immediately places my mild accent before pulling me in for a hug. She is from my neck of the woods: Durham, in the North East, where suicide rates among men are the highest in England.

Shirley is a woman I feel I've known all my life. She's like the women who brought me up: warm, tough, unpretentious, prone to conspiratorial laughter. In no time at all we're making fun of the self-important man, cursing the waitress for her noisy fruit blending. And then she tells me about Daniel, her eldest son, who was 19 when he took his life, about how she came home that day in August 2005 with her two other boys — only 10 and five at the time — and how the elder,

Matthew, found Daniel with her, how she still can't say the word that describes how he did it, even now, ten years later.

Shirley is in London to visit Westminster due to her role in an all-party parliamentary group for suicide prevention. After Daniel died, she and her family did the only thing they could to try and make some good come of it — they set up a charity, which is now their life's work. If U Care Share — Daniel's brothers and cousin picked the name in the year he hanged himself — works with Durham police to provide practical and emotional support to families bereaved by suicide. It is the only organisation of its kind in England.

"The thing people always want to know is: why?" Shirley explains, her hand slowly turning the cutlery on the table. "But I am yet to meet a family who gets a 'ta da!' moment when you find that out, because the person who can tell them isn't here any more.

"Daniel falls into the group of men who had no diagnosis of mental illness at all before they took their own lives," she continues, "and from the outside looking in, he hid the way he was feeling extremely well. Before it happened I didn't think our son was the type of person who takes his own life. Daniel had all the things you think a person needs: he had a job, he had supportive friends, he had his family, he had plans. But it wasn't enough."

I ask Shirley, as a mother of boys, why she thinks three-quarters of all suicides in the UK are male. She can't say for sure — no one can — but she offers an explanation I will hear in some form from almost everyone I talk to, from scientists and academics to charity workers and families.

"Think back," she says. "We still live in an era where, if a female toddler falls down, her mam picks her up, dusts her down, says 'awww' and gives her a cuddle. A little boy falls down and it's 'you don't cry'. That's what we expect from a man — we want them to 'man up'.

"Daniel learned at a very early age to tie his shoelaces, he learned he needed to be physically strong, physically well. But nobody ever spoke to him — I never spoke to him — about the impact of life."

I ask her hopefully about the government, the people she is here to visit today. Last January, when he made his "taboo" comment, Nick Clegg called for a "new ambition for zero suicides across the NHS". Surely, that is a sign those in power are beginning to take the issue seriously?

Shirley shakes her head. "'Zero suicide' is a fabulous... not 'pipe dream', exactly... I would love for us to truly achieve it. But zero suicide is for people who have contact with mental health services. That's what [Clegg] was talking about — people already diagnosed and in the system. What about the majority of suicide cases, who have no diagnosis at all? They're the people we need to reach. We focus on the tiny percentage in care, because the bigger picture is baffling to people. It's too scary to contemplate."

As we say goodbye, Shirley hands me an If U Care Share pack, which I open later. Among the leaflets, pens and stress balls is a charity wristband, sealed in a plastic case with a card. On it is a photo of a handsome young man with short red hair, a smile playing across his lips, his head cocked slightly as though listening to a joke. Reading the dates under his name, I notice Daniel and I were born just a few months apart.

THE REASONS BEHIND EVERY individual suicide are unique and complex, but we know common factors and experiences that contribute: relationship breakdowns, bereavement, socioeconomic factors and mental health problems. These factors affect both sexes and have done since the dawn of time, but in almost every country in the world, for as long as records have existed, suicide rates have been significantly higher among men than women, despite the fact that women make a higher number of suicide attempts.

This "gender paradox" is most commonly explained by method. While women are more likely to opt for means such as a drug overdose, which are less immediately lethal, men are more likely to use more violent methods with greater success rates, such as hanging or shooting themselves. Men are also believed to be more naturally impulsive than women, meaning they are more likely to act rashly on suicidal feelings.

More puzzling and difficult to explain is the steep rise in suicide between 2007 and 2013 for British men, while the figure for that period has declined for women. In 1981, men were 1.9 times more likely to die by suicide than women. Today, we are three times as likely. It's an increase charities and academics have been trying to explain since the Office of National Statistics report was

published, without arriving at a clear consensus. But theories are emerging. Looking at the wider world in that period, the first and most obvious is the 2008 recession and the subsequent rise in unemployment and poverty. In 2013, research published by the British Medical Journal found English regions with the most job losses since 2008 also saw the largest increase in suicide, while a 2015 Samaritans report found "men from the lowest social class, living in the most deprived areas, are up to ten times more likely to end their lives by suicide." Also this year, academics at Bristol, Manchester and Oxford universities estimated 1.000 extra deaths from suicide and an additional 30-40,000 attempts may have occurred following the economic slump.

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Professor Rory O'Connor is the President of the International Academy of Suicide Research and leads the Suicidal Behaviour Research Laboratory at Glasgow University. He has been researching and writing on the topic of suicide for over 20 years and agrees the economy has been a key factor. "It is not that austerity kills, necessarily, but that people who are already vulnerable face another pressure," he says. "If they are worried about their jobs, about not providing for their families, it creates a lot of stress that will impact their well-being."

Anecdotal evidence from suicide helpline staff also suggests a huge rise in callers citing unemployment, job insecurity and benefit cuts as the cause of suicidal thoughts in that period. Women, of course, are victims of economic pressures, too. But research suggests that even today, men attach greater importance to job status and income. A 2014 report by the male suicide prevention charity Calm (Campaign Against Living Miserably), found that 80 per cent of men aged 35-44 consider their job to be "very important" or "important" to their self-esteem, while 42 per cent still believe they should be the main breadwinners in their household (only 13 per cent of women felt the same).

Not only that, but men consider money as central to their appeal to the opposite sex: 40 per cent believed potential sexual or romantic partners are looking for "security/ stability", "financial dependability" and/or "hard-working, successful" men. In reality, a survey of women in the same report found "financial stability" ranked far lower (six per cent) than "kindness", "sense of humour" and "trustworthiness".

Which leads to the bigger issue of how men see themselves and their role in the world, and what impact that has on their mental health. One of the most alarming changes since 2007 is that suicide rates among men in the middle age bracket (45-59) have increased by around 40 per cent, meaning they have caught up with their younger counterparts, historically the highest-risk group.

"They are sometimes referred to as a 'buffer generation'," Professor O'Connor explains. "The same group of men who were at risk two decades ago are at risk now, in their middle age. One theory is that it has to do with the way men see themselves in society, and the way that's changed markedly in the last 20 years. The whole idea of what it is to be a successful man is very different now."

A 2012 Samaritans report called "Men, Suicide and Society" suggests this "buffer generation" is "struggling to cope with major social changes". Having grown up believing in the ideal of the silent, strong provider who was probably a war hero to boot — "austere men like their fathers, who believed you don't talk about your problems, you just get on with it," as O'Connor puts it — they now find themselves in a society where such qualities are no longer required or seen as exemplary.

Decades of social progress mean women are more financially independent and less reliant on men, while at the same time, the concept of the "modern man" — open, progressive, in touch with his feelings — has emerged as the new ideal. Caught between two very different visions of masculinity, often struggling financially at a time when >

they feel they should be at their professional peak, middle-aged men today are also more susceptible to a life event that makes them three times as likely to attempt suicide if it happens: divorce.

The average age of divorce for men in the UK is now 45. The divorce rate began to rocket from the early Eighties onwards and although figures began to slowly decline in 2006, around 120,000 British marriages still fail every year. The Samaritans report states that men in middle age are "dependent primarily on female partners for emotional support", and from the age of 30 onwards tend to have less individual friendships than women. Once they lose their partners, they are less inclined to make new friends or seek help, and become twice as likely to plan to take their own lives.

And while the ONS report showed that the suicide rate among 15-29-year-olds, while still worryingly high, has decreased slightly (the only age group in which that is the case), any hopes that a younger generation are shedding the traditional male tendency to bottle up their feelings may yet prove premature.

An academic study published by the Medical University of Vienna in June 2015 looked at 35 male suicide survivors aged 18–67, and 47 family and friends of suicide survivors. It concluded: "Almost all men reported that their masculine beliefs led to them isolating themselves when they were feeling down, to avoid imposing on others... and instead, relied on coping strategies that required less immediate effort and provided short-term alleviation of problems, for example, drug or alcohol use, gambling and working excessively."

Perhaps most worryingly, "some men reported that adherence to masculine norms meant that feelings associated with being vulnerable provoke greater anxiety than the thought of being dead."

It is a cool, bright sunday morning in July, and along Trafalgar Square, spectators are cheering on exhausted runners as they reach the final stretch of the annual British 10K London Run. Around the corner, the Old Shades pub on Whitehall is filling up with a steady stream of people. Red-faced and limping, smiling and triumphant, they queue patiently for well-earned pints, swapping stories of finishing times and confessing to various aches and pains.

There are 130 of them in total, all decked in the orange bibs of the charity Calm. They have run for sons, brothers, fathers, friends. Many have photos of those they've lost stuck to their backs — men with bashful smiles,

captured in moments of joy that proved more precious than they should have.

At the bar I meet David, a big Scot with a ready smile and gentle, friendly manner. He seems, by any external measure, like a man without a care in the world. I automatically assume he is running for a friend or a relative; it seems like the kind of thing he'd do. "No, mate," he says matter-of-factly, "I'm running for myself. I've suffered with anxiety and depression for years."

David tried antidepressants but they didn't work. Then, with some reluctance, he agreed to see a counsellor. "When I first sat down, I told the guy, I have no idea why I'm feeling the way I'm feeling, and no idea what I am supposed to say. But slowly, it works.

"Men are trying to be comic book heroes, rather than real people. Hiding behind football terraces, computer games, behind pints or lifting weights... we're not simple creatures, but we pretend to be"

By talking you join the dots and piece together how you are feeling."

After David leaves, I tell another runner, a woman in her forties, how talking to him surprised me. She nods in agreement. "You hear the word 'suicide' and you immediately imagine a depressed, lonely person. I remind myself, it's often the loudest voice in the room, the outgoing guy, the life and soul of the party, the one who is worrying about whether everyone else is OK, that is really struggling himself."

After an hour or so, Jane Powell, Calm's CEO and founder, gathers everyone together at one end of the pub. It's a tight squeeze so she climbs onto a table to address them. She shouts out that today they've raised £50,000 — a record. A cheer goes up. It's an excuse for another drink.

No other organisation is doing more than Calm to address male suicide in the UK. It stages music and comedy events, distributes a quarterly magazine called *Calmzine* and runs awareness campaigns that adopt a brisk, no-nonsense tone that has become the charity's hallmark. You may have noticed its "Save the Male" posters, or those comparing the number of British soldiers killed in Afghanistan to men who have taken their own lives (40:50 in 2012), or heard public supporters like rapper Professor Green talking about it on *Newsnight*.

But the main way Calm tackles suicide is by giving men a safe place to talk. Its helpline is manned by eight staff members who work seven nights a week fielding over 5,000 calls and web-chats a month, more than they can handle. Team manager Zoe says the callers range from teenagers confused about their sexuality to lonely elderly men who want to hear a friendly voice before bed.

"Often they say their parents or their friends have given them the 'man up' or 'get a grip' line," she says. "It doesn't mean they don't care, but it does mean they won't talk to them and [they] turn to us instead. It's OK to talk to us because we're strangers. Quite often we never even find out their names."

After a couple of hours, the runners in the Old Shades start drifting away. Each one, without exception, finds Jane to thank her, usually accompanied by a hug. According to her, the huge response to Calm's helpline — the only UK one devoted to men — disproves the theory men are incapable of reaching out when they feel distressed. "I think men want to talk, they just want to do it in a different way," she says. "I've been told time and time again, 'men won't ask for help.' And you just think, 'OK, why the fuck are we always struggling to take [all] these calls then?'

BOOTHAM CRESCENT, home of York City Football Club, is an old-school League Two ground in the centre of the city, where you can still stand on the terraces, and adverts for local taxi firms and cleaning companies line the perimeter of the pitch. Upstairs at one end of a narrow function room, a group of players from the under-21 squad are gathering on assorted desks and chairs. They debate their performances and opponents in the last game. One lets out a loud fart and they all laugh. Another walks in dressed in a fresh white tracksuit, and they laugh again. "Didn't know you were coming as Roger Federer!" someone shouts out.

At the other end of the function room, a young guy in a black tracksuit and glasses is setting up a TV screen. Matt Smith, from If U Care Share, assisted his father in running this workshop for three years, before his dad threw him in the deep end one day and told him he was on his own. Since then, he has delivered hundreds of talks at football grounds and schools all over the country.

Matt beckons the lads over. They take their seats — cocky ones at the front, shy ones at the back — four or five rows of spotty faces, gelled fringes and vibrating knees. Matt begins orchestrating a series of small games designed to make the boys think about stress and depression and the way unexpressed emotions can pile up and become overwhelming. Volunteers (the cocky ones), are made to catch balls or wear silly costumes. They watch clips of David Beckham talking about his OCD and the depression that followed his red card against Argentina in the 1998 World Cup. They discuss Gary Speed.

Matt is a natural public speaker. He loves football and the lads sense it. It also helps that, despite being only 21 himself, he somehow appears a lot older. So they more or less respect him, a young guy telling them to talk about their feelings, telling them it's actually OK not to feel OK, as far as their attention spans and their mobile phones will allow.

Then Matt sits down and plays the video. It shows Matt telling the story of how he came home one day, aged 10, to find his brother Daniel, his best friend, had killed himself. The chewing, the texting, the fidgeting all stops. The only sound in the room is a lawnmower buzzing faintly on the pitch outside.

"I used to end this presentation by telling you that suicide is the second biggest killer of young men," Matt stands back up to tell them. "But I cannit. Not any more. Because now it's the number one killer of young men."

Targeting young males involved in sports has emerged as a major tactic in the fight for suicide prevention, with other charities such as Console performing similar workshops at rugby clubs. It is based firstly on the premise that so-called macho men who play sport are less likely to open up in the first place but, more positively, it is to try and harness the support network of a team: the men may not feel suicidal themselves, but they can be taught to spot the signs in those they share a dressing room with.

"It's about trying to bring about a culture change, so that young lads learn to talk about being down or stressed in the same way they would having a bad ankle," says Matt, who believes he should be able to run workshops with boys as young as four.

"There's this fear among men that if we talk about suicide then it might happen, but actually being open and comfortable with the topic could make a big difference."

Charities like calm and If U Care Share are trying to offer solutions to the male suicide crisis, but as with any area of public health, they can't do it alone. Until the government takes the issue seriously, they will be fighting a losing battle. "The helpline is a bandage and what we do is try and stem the flow," Jane Powell explains. "But the idea that Calm exists for the next 100 years? That's terrible. If we're going to get serious about it we have to change society, otherwise what are we doing?"

Professor O'Connor agrees the government needs to do more. "Speaking as a researcher, suicide is a chronically underfunded area," he says. "Governments have a responsibility not only to make it a public priority on a policy level, but to provide resources and services that actually work."

Overall, while £671m is spent nationwide annually on sexual health initiatives, £160m on encouraging people to stop smoking, and £108m on anti-obesity programmes, only £40m is spent on mental health, within which suicide prevention is just one problem. There is evidence, in other UK regions, of increased funding making real inroads into the issue of suicide. In the past ten years, Scotland has gone from being historically one of the worst affected areas of the UK to the sole region actually bucking the trend. A large part of the reason is that in 2002, the Scottish Government launched "Choose Life", a ten-year national action plan aimed at reducing suicide, which has achieved a 19 per cent fall in incidents.

O'Connor, who helped develop the strategy, explains: "There has been a huge focus [in Scotland] on providing people on the front line of services — police, GPs, psychologists — with applied suicide skills training, so they could identify those at risk.

"At the same time, there was a big antistigma campaign, an effort to get the simple message out there that suicide prevention is everyone's business and that talking about it is a good thing. There is this perception among people that goes: 'if I ask somebody if they are suicidal, that will plant the idea in their head.' There is no evidence for that at all. It does quite the opposite."

ALTHOUGH THERE IS NO SIMPLE SOLUTION to reducing the number of men in Britain who take their own lives, everyone I speak to agrees there needs to be a concerted effort by the government to learn from Scotland's success and support both gender-specific mental health research and services such as those provided by Calm and the Samaritans. At the start of 2016, pressure is mounting: 200 high-profile figures, including

former spin doctor Alastair Campbell and director Danny Boyle, have signed an open letter from Calm calling for equality between physical and mental health treatment ahead of the government's spending review.

But at the same time, the crisis suggests there needs to be a deeper societal shift that we all participate in. We need to re-evaluate our attitude not just towards mental health, but masculinity itself.

I talk to Joseph, one of the runners I met near Trafalgar Square. He's a handsome, articulate 29-year-old with a winning grin.

"I made a suicide attempt when I was 18, and then found myself in a psychiatric ward," he says. "It's still very vivid. I remember two of my best mates visiting, and one of them sitting there in tears. It was one of the most desolate places I've ever been. I don't remember feeling any lower than that."

With the help of his family, Joseph managed to fight his way back. But in order to do so, he says, his perception of what it means to be a man had to change.

"We are trying to be comic book heroes, rather than real people. Still trying to hide behind the football terraces, or the computer game screen. Behind pints, or lifting weights, or talking about how many women we've fucked," he says. "We're not simple creatures, men, but we pretend to be. Because all this time we've been told being a man should be simple. Our dads believed it, and their dads did, and their dads did.

"Sometimes," he continues, "to make fun of women, men say, 'All they do is talk about their feelings.' But we could learn from that. The truth is, our brotherhood is not as safe a place as their sisterhood. I think we need to really look at each other and ask: what are we doing? Are we being ourselves, or what we're expected to be?"

It doesn't sound enough, does it? That the cure for the British male suicide crisis is talking more about our feelings, and ridding ourselves of the unrealistic and outdated expectations we place on ourselves as men. But the truth is that, alongside greater action from our government, these might be the best weapons we have to make sure we lose less men like Daniel.

A few years after Joseph tried to kill himself again, aged 22, his girlfriend gave birth to a baby girl. "When I first knew she was coming, I was terrified," he remembers. "But when she was born, I looked at her and I realised that even if every day was going to be tough as hell, I had to do something about it. I had to make sure I was alive." I fucareshare.co.uk; thecalmzone.net; mind.org.uk; consolecounselling.co.uk; samaritans.org







### **Oliver Spencer**

Left: Burgundy wool roll-neck, £22O, by Oliver Spencer



#### **Louis Vuitton**

Navy cotton blouson, £1,060; white printed cotton T-shirt, £485; grey cotton trousers, £610, all by Louis Vuitton





#### Giorgio Armani

Brown cashmere/wool coat, £1,695; brown cotton T-shirt, £1,055; white cotton T-shirt, £190; grey cotton sweatpants, £610, all by Giorgio Armani

WITH SEVEN MOVIES in cinemas from early 2015 to early 2016, Matthias Schoenaerts is the current holder of the James Franco Ubiquity Prize (formerly the Samuel L Jackson It's-Him-Again Trophy). "Oh God," sighs the 38-year-old Belgian actor, "it's mere coincidence that they come out together like that — one of them I shot four years ago. I hope they don't suffocate one another."

The spine of this run is what showbiz bible Variety calls "a triple-shot of English-lingo period romances": A Little Chaos, Suite Française and Far From the Madding Crowd. The film he shot in 2011, The Loft, is a US remake of the 2008 erotic thriller Loft, which is still the biggest ever Flemish language film at the Belgian box office. (Schoenaerts plays the same part in both original and remake.)

That leaves three films, all out in the new year. In *The Danish Girl*, he plays a small but vital role as the calm voice of reason counselling Eddie Redmayne and Alicia Vikander as the former's character undergoes the world's first sex change. "It's a film about courage, selflessness and generosity in a historical context, and that's why I loved it," says Schoenaerts.

He makes a bigger splash in A Bigger Splash, starring alongside Tilda Swinton, Dakota Johnson and Ralph Fiennes in an arty, sexy drama about four people summering in a beautiful villa on a remote Italian island, for which cast and crew summered in beautiful villas on a remote Italian island — Pantelleria, in the Strait of Sicily.

The first half of the film belongs to Fiennes' flamboyant music producer, who will say anything, shag anything and snort everything. The scene in which he dances at length, in open shirt and swim shorts, to The Rolling Stones' "Emotional Rescue", is truly magnificent.

"Ralph is brilliant, and maybe my guy comes to the front after being more of a silent observer, but I see it as all our movie. We all play for each other," says Schoenaerts. He is being modest: Schoenaerts plays a photographer who is the polar



#### **Boss**

Grey checked woolblend coat, £600; grey cotton T-shirt, £45; grey cotton trousers, £170, all by Boss opposite of Fiennes' character — quiet, suffering, on the wagon — and that he manages to be equally compelling is testament to his acting skills.

Both turns will come as a surprise to those who have seen Schoenaerts in his two most famous roles. In *Bullhead*, the 2011 Belgian crime drama nominated for the Best Foreign Film Oscar, he was bulked-up, brooding and brutal: Marlon himself would not have begrudged the "Belgian Brando" comparisons that followed.

The following year he played, with similar explosive energy, an underground street fighter who falls in love with a double amputee, in the fantastic French movie *Rust and Bone*. You will recognise this side of Schoenaerts should you watch *Disorder*, the last of his seven-card trick of new films, in which he plays a bodyguard with post-traumatic stress disorder involved in a home invasion. He's especially good, fierce and formidable, in this one. It got inside his head.

"It's a mental illness that you're portraying and that is... something," he says. "I knew when I started it that I would end up being in that kind of space. Then again, that's part of what we do. It was crazy but I enjoyed it."

Next up: six months off. "I'll read, play sports, paint." The latter is street art; there's YouTube evidence and the week after *Esquire* meets him, he's painting a mural on a friend's rooftop wall. The sport will be boxing or football. "I play left wing for a local team in Antwerp. Every now and then the magic pops out, but I accept as age kicks in, you're not as skilled as you used to be." Only on the pitch, though, clearly.

#### Interview by Paul Wilson

The Danish Girl is out on 1 January; A Bigger Splash is out on 12 February; Disorder is out on 25 March



### Polo Ralph Lauren

Camel wool double-breasted coat, £1,195; blue wool jumper, £255, both by Polo Ralph Lauren



Photographer's assistants: Luke Beresford; Niklas Ruffer; Dougal MacArthur; Mark Hilton Fashion assistant: Teresa Eberle Grooming: Guillaume Vappereau See Stockists page for details

#### **Alfred Dunhill**

Right: Black merino alpaca knit jumper, £1,250; khaki cotton trousers, £295, both by Alfred Dunhill



Photographs by
Tomo Brejc

Fashion by

Gareth Scourfield

# The dark side

This festive season, eveningwear is sleek, sharp and stylish. Dressing the part for Esquire: brand new Star Wars villain Domhnall Gleeson



## "The assistant director had a megaphone and before a take he'd shout, 'Do not forget, people: this is Star Wars!'"

One hectic afternoon last summer, Domhnall Gleeson found himself suffering from what can only be described as a post-lunch slump. He wasn't sitting at a desk, staring at a computer screen, whiling away the hours until end of play. Instead, he was at Pinewood Studios, preparing to shoot a scene for *Star Wars: Episode VII — The Force Awakens*, Disney's \$200m mega-sequel.

"On a film set, you need to hit the ground running, but there were these sleepy half-hours," recalls Gleeson. "Luckily, the assistant director had this megaphone and — right before a take — he'd shout, 'Do not forget, people: this is *Star Wars*!" The 32-year-old Dubliner smiles. "There was a rabble-rousing element to it; everyone would be high-fiving, like, 'Yeah! Come on!"

The Force Awakens — for those of you who've spent the past few years in a galaxy far, far away — is director JJ Abrams' hugely anticipated sequel to the original trilogy's final adventure, 1983's Return Of The Jedi. Set 30 years on, it follows a band of new characters as well as returning old-timers, including Harrison Ford's Han Solo, Carrie Fisher's Princess Leia, a couple of famous droids and a notable wookie. Gleeson is the villainous General Hux, joining a lineage of infamous Star Wars bad guys crowned by the greatest of all: Darth Vader. Did living on the dark side get under his skin? Gleeson laughs. "If you bring a character like that home, you'll end up trying to rule a small country. But there was great fun to be had with him."

If he sounds relaxed about this big break, then perhaps it's because *Star Wars* is not his first huge movie franchise: he played the eldest Weasley brother, Bill, in Parts One and Two of *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*,

alongside his father Brendan, the eminent Irish actor. Did that experience prepare him well for *The Force Awakens*? "At first I got really excited, and then the nerves did follow. But you have to just look at it as one movie and figure out your place in its story."

Since Potter, Gleeson has compiled an eclectic CV: a lovelorn time-traveller in Richard Curtis's *About Time* (2013); a murderer, again opposite his dad, in *Calvary* (2014); a nervy computer programmer in Alex Garland's terrific *Ex Machina* (2015); and most recently, Jim Farell, suitor to Saoirse Ronan's character in *Brooklyn* (2015).

If Star Wars is his most high-profile movie to date, there will also be a fair amount of scrutiny on his role in The Revenant, director Alejandro González Iñárritu's follow-up to the Oscar-winning Birdman. Set in the 1820s, the film tells the story of a fur trapper (Leonardo DiCaprio), seeking vengeance after his companions, including Gleeson, rob and leave him for dead when he's mauled by a bear. The shoot was arduous: "I knew it was going to be difficult," says Gleeson. "I knew Alejandro was going to push everybody. But it wasn't like he was a dictator in a castle. Everybody went through the shit on this one, him included."

Gleeson's father is routinely described as a "character actor". Would the son be happy with the same description? "If a character actor is someone who can play different kinds of roles and not just the same thing all the time, then bring it on."

#### Interview by Jacob Stolworthy

Star Wars: Episode VII — The Force Awakens is out on 16 December

#### Prada

Right: Black wool coat, £2,550; black nylon shirt, £360; black jeans, £360, all by Prada

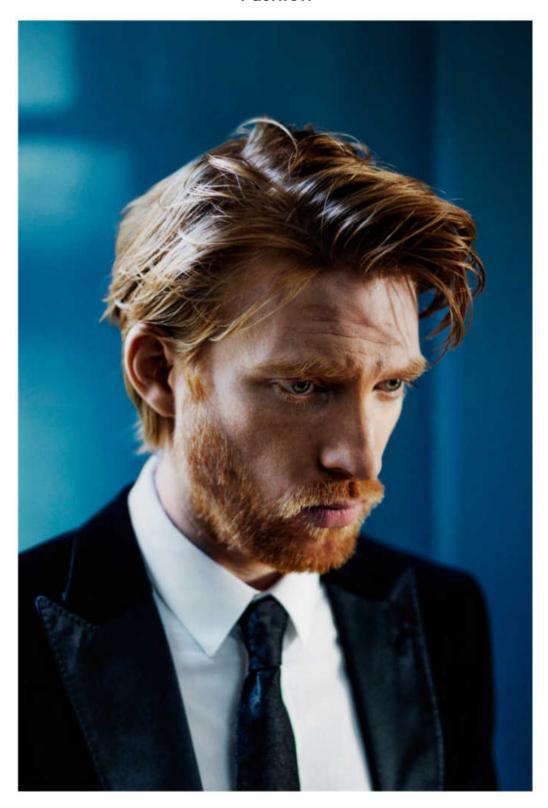






#### **Dior Homme**

Black wool jacket with denim collar, £1,300; white cotton shirt, £370; black silk tie, £130; black wool trousers, £500, all by Dior Homme



#### **Boss**

Black velvet jacket, £580; white cotton dress shirt, £100; black printed silk tie, £65, all by Boss Photographer's assistant: Ben Ottewell | Fashion assistant: Teresa Eberle | Digital operator: lan Murrels | Grooming: Jennie Roberts @ Frank Agency using Bobbi Brown and Bumble & Bumble | See Stockists page for details







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### **Hastings & Co**

Hastings & Co prides itself on delivering beautifully minimal, high quality watches for your enjoyment. The watch featured above has yet to be released, and represents Hastings' second edition. It will go on sale in December for an estimated presale price of \$200 USD. The watch features 20uM plating, sapphire crystal, an open case back, butterfly clasps, Italian calfskin leather, and a Miyota 9015 automatic movement.

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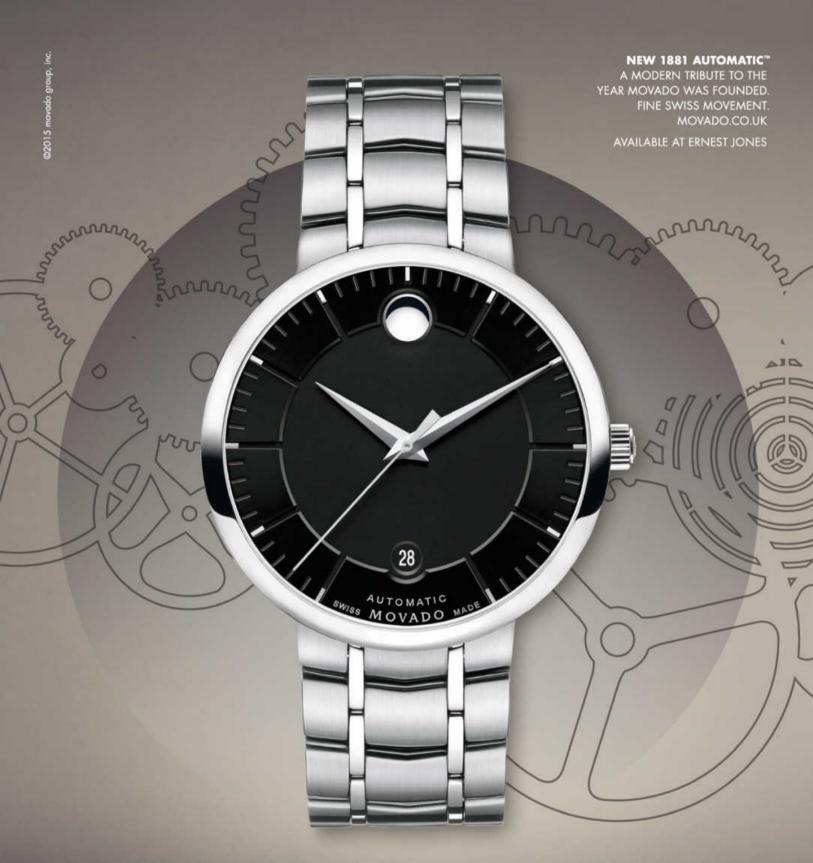


## **Richard James socks**

£17 per pair

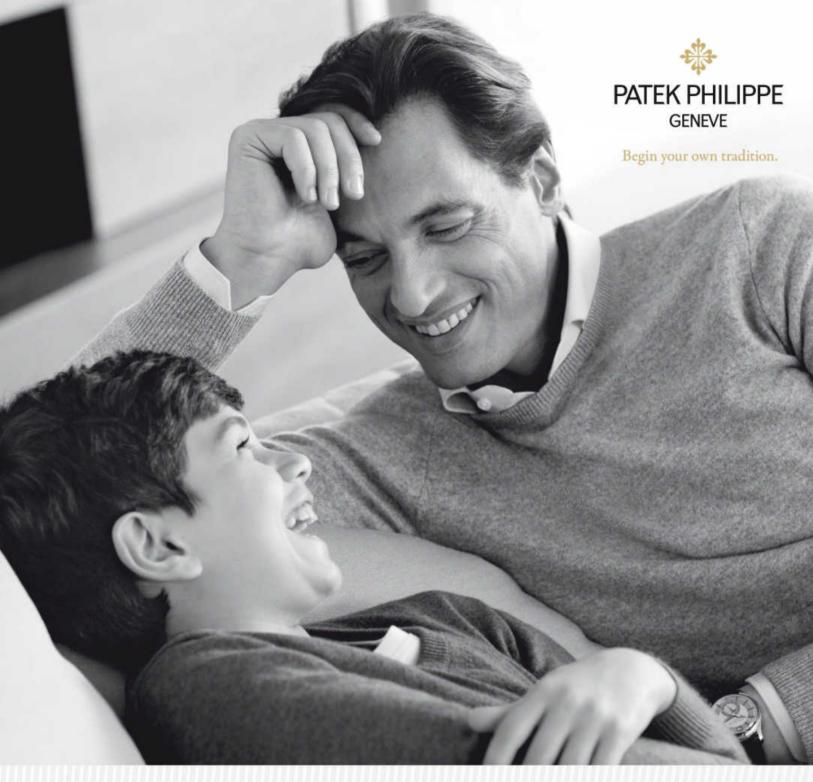
richardjames.co.uk

Nothing is certain in this world but death and taxes, although other things run those two pretty close in the inevitability stakes. Such as: it's Christmas, and you're a man, so at least one relative is going to buy you socks. Now, don't be churlish; this is good news. Few things in life feel as luxurious as pulling on a pair of unworn socks, fresh from their wrapping. That sensation is amplified when said socks are made from the softest cashmere or the finest wool. These multi-hued merino socks from Richard James are *Esquire*'s favourites. And if you don't get a pair or seven in your stocking — ho, ho — then why not treat yourself?



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